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A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 331.

## THE LOVER AND THE ROSE.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD.

The lover sung at his lady's gate:  
Tender and sweet was his midnight song:  
"Under thy lattice I watch and wait;  
Come, for thy lover has waited long."  
Proud of the blood of a noble line—  
Proud with a pride that was ages old—  
Listened she by her lattice vine,  
While, in the moonlight, his love was told:  
"Lady, I love thee, although as far  
Thou art from me as yon trembling star.  
Always, lady, my heart will be  
True to its honor, and so to thee."  
Close to the lattice the lady stood;  
Her heart was stirred with a tumult sweet:  
Pride for a moment she half forgot,  
And dropped a rose at her lover's feet.  
Then she remembered his low degree;  
Name or fame must her lover bring;  
Stately and proud must her wooer be,  
But her heart best fast, as she heard him sing:  
"Lady, I love thee although as far  
Thou art from me as yon trembling star.  
Always, lady, my heart will be  
True to its honor, and so to thee."  
Years went by, but she ne'er forgot  
Him who had loved her, of low degree.  
Often she thought of his starlight song:  
"Always faithful and true to thee!"  
And, by-and-by, as the years went on,  
Her heart grew tender with love for him,  
And she listened and longed by her lattice-bars  
For the song he sung in the moonlight dim:  
"Lady, I love thee, although as far  
Thou art from me as yon trembling star.  
Always, lady, my heart will be  
True to its honor, and so to thee!"  
There came a message to her one day:  
Dead was the lover her heart denied.  
A withered rose on his bosom lay.  
And clasping it, he had smiled and died.  
Stricken with sorrow, her tears fell fast,  
As leaning out from her lattice-bar,  
She cried, "I loved thee, and thou art now  
As far from me as the furthest star!"  
But a voice sung low at her lattice vine:  
"What life denied me, in death is mine!  
Always, lady, my heart will be  
True to its love, and I wait for thee!"

## Black Eyes and Blue;

OR,

The Peril of Beauty and the Power of Purty.

## A TALE OF COUNTRY AND CITY.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### A VANISHING FIGURE.

The sun shines as brightly on the stream that flows over a corpse as over a reed; the most dreadful tragedies are those that happen silently and leave no outward mark. A new pallor on some young face, a deeper wrinkle on an older one, or a thickening of gray in the changing hair, is often all the token given of ruined hopes, wrecked hearts, terrible earthquake outbursts of feeling which leave the soul scarred and seamed.

No one in the village, saving the four who were at the bridge that evening, knew anything of the little drama which had been acted there—three performers and one spectator. The spectator was as hushed as death about the single scene in a lifelong tragedy, which she had changed to witness.

Florence came down to breakfast the following morning looking a little pale and heavy-eyed, but when her mother noticed it, she gave her father a shifting glance, burst into one of her merry laughs, and began to prattle about some trifling light as thistledown glistening in the blue air.

Her father was not, by nature, so quick-witted as an actor as Florence—he appeared a little dull that morning—but he simulated an appetite which he did not possess, forced down his breakfast, kissed his wife and daughter as usual, when the ceremony was over, and strolled down to his bank.

Florence went up to her own room, shut and locked the door, and was sitting staring stonily out of the window, a strange, hard, rebellious expression on her small, dark face—the scarlet lips pressed tightly together, the black brows contracted, the usually sparkling, flashing, melting eyes glittering under their black as night, but curiously small and intense—when a servant tapped at the door to say that Miss Vernon was in the parlor and wished to speak with her a moment.

A mocking smile trembled on Florence's lips. "Oh, how I hate her!" she murmured, and her little white teeth flashed savagely as she said it. "Fated to be rivals in everything! And I always to get the worst of it! It must not—shall not be!" and she sprang up from her chair and stamped on the floor. "I will pay her off yet! I will—I will! I will wring her heart as mine is wrung! And she my father's child—my own half-sister! Oh, how strange, how dreary!"

Going to her mirror she gave herself a scrutinizing glance, as if she feared her thoughts might be written on her face; and the next moment flew down the stairs, and, with a gay "good-morning," gave the Judas kiss to Violet. "Papa is waiting for me at the gate," said the caller, "so I dare not stay a minute. We are going to call on a lady at the hotel—a stranger, and client of papa's—and I just stopped to tell you that I want you to come to tea to-night—will you?" Ever generous and impulsive, Violet took this way to assure Florence that she had really forgiven her her cruel tauntings. "Be sure and come. It will be very entertaining," and then the two girls laughed, as girls will laugh, at they know not what, and Violet kissed her friend again, and hurried out to join her father.

"She is going to meet her own mother—and she does not dream of it!" thought Florence,



By the time James had opened the door his master had changed his mind about sending for the policeman.

looking after the slim figure, in its fresh morning muslin, with a deep interest. "Yes, I shall go there to tea, of course. I must play my part for a while yet. I wish I could be present at this romantic reunion which is about to take place. How Mr. Vernon must enjoy it!" and she laughed bitterly.

Florence's was no common character. She overflowed with vitality; the rich coloring of lip and cheek, the velvet smoothness of her skin, the lustre and power of her splendid eyes, her whole vivid expression, told of life of the intensest kind. Her feelings were of the quickness and passionateness indicated by her temperament. Well-governed, subdued by conscience and religious aspiration, they would never bring her to harm. But hers was not a nature to bear trouble or disgrace meekly—the first she would find too tedious, the last she would seek compensation for in some desperate acts of her own. Self-restraint she had never been taught. However wrong a part he had acted toward others—known to be, in business, cold and calculating—a man whose inner life was quite different from his outward pretense—yet to his daughter Florence Mr. Goldsborough had been a fond, devoted father. She was perfect in his eyes. He had laughed at and applauded her baby-storms of rage; and he did so still, when, less often, she got into one of her moods. He had always told her how handsome she was—what a belle she would be, when grown into a young lady—and had encouraged her love of finery by buying for her everything she asked for. Nor had her mother been much more judicious. Poor, spoiled child! illy prepared to face the trouble about to come!

Mr. Vernon and Violet walked on in the direction of the hotel.

"Make yourself as pretty as possible, child—the lady may be critical, you know," he had said to her before starting.

So Violet, modest as her namesake, was dreading a little this visit to the wonderful French lady, who had, of course, seen so much of the world and would be so fastidious.

Madame D'Eglantine had taken the most expensive suite of rooms at the hotel; her maid waited upon her as if she were a princess in disguise, and all, consequently, were deeply impressed by the merits of the beautiful foreigner. One of the hotel waiters, with a most deferential air, showed the callers to madame's private parlor.

Violet could not be otherwise than graceful, and she was most shyly and charmingly so, when her father took her in and presented her to Madame D'Eglantine, who came quickly toward her, put her arms lightly about her and kissed her fair cheek.

"What winning manners!" thought the girl—"perhaps it is the way with all French ladies—they are said to be so demonstrative."

Her own slight confusion prevented her noticing the tears in madame's beautiful dark eyes, or any other of the signs of extreme agitation which she so soon controlled.

Madame D'Eglantine spoke English easily, with only a delicious little foreign accent that softened it and added a grace. She made the young lady sit by her, on a sofa, and chatted on so pleasantly that Violet felt at her ease almost immediately; and as madame insisted on a prolonged call, Mr. Vernon excused himself for a half-hour, going to look after the affairs of his office, and then returned for his daughter.

Violet rose to go. Madame kissed her again, thanked her for her visit, and added:

"You must come to see me almost every day. I am very lonely here. I will try to repay your attentions by improving your French," with a smile. "You speak my language tolerably; but you will improve. We do all our gossiping in French, my dear."

"Oh, thank you—it will be a great privilege. But I did not need that temptation," rejoined Violet, prettily—and so the first meeting of mother and daughter terminated pleasantly, the latter going away delighted with Madame D'Eglantine, and without one thrill of intuition to warn her of the truth.

As for the lady, no sooner did the door close between her and her sweet child, than she pressed her hand to her heart, calling faintly for her maid, who came running from the adjoining room, and supported her mistress to the sofa.

"You saw her, Terese?—my own, own child! My dear daughter! Was she not sweet, good, charming? Ah, Terese, it is for this I have contrived to live through all these dragging years! For this that I fought, like a tiger, for my good name—that I would not die of sorrow, or even of shame—of loneliness, misery, suspense. For this that I contested my rights to my inheritance, and never abandoned them through the long struggle with my selfish relatives. And now, thank the good Father, I have an unspotted name to give my child—her father cannot spurn her from her right to his name; and I have a noble fortune to bestow upon my own old family name to bestow upon my darling! How happy it makes me that I have so much to give her! Ah, I repent my promise to that man, last night, that I would say nothing to the world until August. I should not have waited an hour—not one hour!—for have I not waited sixteen years? I cannot smother the mother-cry of my heart. I know, I feel, that the next time my darling comes to see me, I shall tell her all. She must know that I am her mother. She will love me, and be glad to have found me. Terese, do I look as happy as I feel? Why, I seem to myself to be the careless girl again that I was when he came to me, and turned the sunshine black for me! Everything is bright once more—give me joy, Terese!"

"I do, madame, with all my heart," responded the faithful maid, who had long been her mistress' most trusted confidante. "Your daughter is all, and more, than you could ask—so pure, so artless, madame, it does one good to be in her presence."

"That is true. It cannot hurt one to love a creature as good as she is," and the lady, her cheeks glowing like those of a girl of eighteen, her eyes shining through happy tears, fell into a smiling reverie.

Terese looked at her mistress affectionately, but would not disturb her by speaking until she came out of her dreamland.

"The gentleman who adopted her—madame must feel much gratitude to him! He is one in ten million!—and he is so modest about it, he presumes not at all."

"He is a gentleman, Terese, who would do honor to any society. He is too generous to demand my gratitude; but he knows that he has it. Ah, child! how different would my life have been had Fate thrown in my path a man like that in place of the villain whom I was too ignorant to comprehend! Brush my hair, please, Terese. I am nervous, under the excitement of the morning, and that will quiet me sooner than anything else."

The Frenchwoman smiled to herself as she went after the brush.

"Madame looks almost as young and quite as pretty as the child," she thought; and returning, she took down the lady's long bright hair, and brushed out its threads of gold gently and patiently, while madame sat lost in a half-smiling reverie.

Meantime, on her way home, Violet put her bright face in at the office door, and told Charlie that he must be sure and come to tea that afternoon, for Miss Florence Goldsborough was to be there.

"As if that would be any additional inducement to me!" answered Charlie, in a low voice—not intended for Mr. Vernon's ear—and with a meaning look which brought a touch of color and a faint smile to the young lady's face. "So you have forgiven your naughty little friend, already!" he added, reproachfully.

"Not until she asked forgiveness, Charlie."

"Oh, it's all right, then, I dare say. But I can't affirm that I admire Miss Florence's spiteful little ways, for all that."

Yet that evening, had you been at Mr. Vernon's tea-table, or in his parlor afterward, you would not have believed Mr. Ward had he again affirmed that he did not admire Florence Goldsborough—his whole manner would have contradicted such a statement; and Violet saw it with a silent, sharp pang, not so much of jealousy as of sorrow.

If Florence had been in a room full of brilliant people she could not have taken more

trouble to be charming. She was gay to recklessness. Never had her eyes been so laughing, dazzling, glorious, changeable; her cheeks burned with too intense a red; neither of the others noticed the strange, quick, sidelong glance she occasionally darted at Violet.

"Why! it is ten o'clock! I did not dream it was so late!" she exclaimed, at last, pausing in the mad waltz she had been taking with Charlie about the parlors to the time of the music which Violet played for them. "Where is my hat? I shall be chided by mamma for staying out so long!"

She tied on her hat, with a most coquettish

look at the young gentleman, who stood ready

to wait upon her to her home.

"Good-by, Violet, my pet. Forget and forgive all my sins, won't you, little saint! Don't

think anything bad about me, whatever others

may say," saying this, a little incoherently, she

kissed her hostess, took Charlie's arm, and

went down the steps, in the full moonlight,

flinging back such an arch, mocking, half-wicked,

wholly-fascinating look that poor Violet

stood staring after them, with aching heart,

afraid to think of Charlie alone with the en-

chantress, walking under the wayside elms,

with the moon's glamour on that bright, mock-

ing face to make it more lovely and irresist-

ible.

"She does not care for him—she is only flirt-

ing with him; but he cannot see that," Violet

whispered to herself, watching them until their

forms were lost down the tree-shadowed street.

Now that they were out in the magical,

warm moonlight Florence did not seem to be

in so much haste to get home; she herself pro-

posed that they should prolong their walk;

and she looked up at the sky with those great,

soft, melting eyes, and then at Charlie, until she

had him quite confused.

"Charlie," she said, very softly, as they fi-

nally approached her home, "I want you to do

one little favor for me—make me one little

promise—will you?"

"If it lies within my power," was the rash

answer.

"Oh, it does! It's the merest trifle in the

world. I want you to let me slip this ring on your finger," she said, drawing a quaint and valuable ring of opals and diamonds from her second finger and playfully putting it on the little finger of Charlie's left hand; "and now that it is on, I want you to promise me—on your word of honor as a gentleman—to wear it until I see you again."

"By which you mean until to-morrow," laughed Charlie.

"Do you promise to wear my ring until the next time we meet?"

"What shall be my reward for so serious an undertaking?"

He spoke in jest, for her manner was that of a frolicsome girl bent on some small piece of mischief; but that manner suddenly changed and she gave him a thrilling look as she answered in a solemn voice, as if entering into a compact:

"Whatever you ask, Charlie. You shall choose your reward."

"Then I promise to wear your ring until I see you again."

"Good. Now, one more stipulation: will you also promise not to tell any one that I asked you to wear it?"

She was smiling again, looking coaxingly up at him from under drooping lashes. What a beautiful girl she was! and how full of wit, fun and kittenish tricks! the young man thought, as he dallied with his answer just for the sake of prolonging the pleasure of having her coax him, and of watching the changing eyes and the little mouth curving from a smile into a pout.

"You shall not have the ring at all unless you promise both things, Mr. Ward."

"Ah! Well, I promise."

"There, now, it is a solemn compact—as solemn as if signed and sealed! You are to wear my ring—without telling any one how it came into your possession—until you see me again. And, Charlie, be very careful of it! Papa brought that ring from Paris when he was a young man; he had it laid away for years, but gave it to me on my sixteenth birthday, a month ago. It has more than a money value, though that is great. And now I must really go to the house. Good-by," and she held out her little hand, but snatched it away when he would have held it longer than was necessary, kissed it, airily, to him from the steps; and, the next instant, vanished in the darkness of her father's hall.

When certain that the witching vision had quite disappeared Charlie turned and walked toward his hotel, his hand burning at the touch of the ring which sparkled balefully in the moonlight, and his mind a chaos of images of dark curls and splendid eyes, of rash promises, a sweet, persuasive voice, a charming little figure, full of grace, kissing its hand to him.

"But how icy cold her hand was!" thought the student.

When Charlie awoke the next morning the first thing of which he became distinctly conscious was the ring, which was a little tight on his finger, and which flashed like a small rainbow when he raised his hand.

"It is a very conspicuous jewel," he thought,

"I hope the little witch will reclaim it before

night."

But 'before night' it had become apparent to him that Florence Goldsborough intended him to wear her signet for some time.

Indeed, before noon, the whole village knew that Florence had run away from home; that she had left the house in the night and gone to the station, where she had taken the midnight express—which stopped at Lycurgus for water—north.

Only her father knew, however, that she had taken with her a thousand dollars, which she had abstracted from the safe in his bedroom. Only her father had a suspicion of the real causes which had led her to this desperate action. A guilty conscience burned the truth into his heart.

Of course, Mr. Vernon had his conjectures that the girl might have learned something of the disclosures soon to be made; and, in her shame and anger at her father, been rash enough to fly from her friends. But he was not certain of it.

As the gossips said: "Florence was not like other girls—she had lots of good and bad in her—it was just like her to want to get up a sensation by some such trick!" and so, with others, he looked for her speedy return.

Not so her wretched father. He felt that his child had made a desperate move in a desperate mood; he knew that he had lost her!

Nevertheless, he had telegrams sent to Portland, Boston and New York, instructing the detectives to look out for a young lady, and take the best care of her; if found, until her parents could reach her. He, himself, as soon as he believed a clue had been found, started out in search; but he came home, at the end of a week, without her, or any tidings of her.

"Ethan, do you think she has killed herself?" asked the unhappy mother.

"No, she is not one of that kind," was the moody reply.

It seemed, however, as if that little figure which Charlie had seen vanish out of the moonlight had disappeared from the face of the earth; so utterly was it lost; and the opal ring continued to glimmer and flash on the hand where it had been so artfully fastened.

### CHAPTER V.

THE SPELL BROUGHT BY THE RING.  
CHARLIE WARD felt a little ashamed of the ring which he wore who he found, as he did before the day was over, how many people recognized it as Florence Goldsborough's, and rallied him on having a knowledge of her where-



abouts. Every one who saw the ring took it for granted that an engagement existed between him and the runaway girl. Long before night he would have thrown the costly bauble into the first rubbish-heap he came to had he not been bound by his promise.

Charlie was not so dull but that he comprehended that Florence had purposely entangled him; annoyed and surprised, only half-seeing through her purpose, he yet felt himself inexorably bound to keep his word. He had said, upon his word of honor, that he would wear the ring until he saw her again, and wear it he must.

His embarrassment increased, when, late in the afternoon, Mr. Goldsborough called at the office, having heard some rumor of the jewel.

"You are wearing my daughter's ring?" the banker said, in a tremulous, eager voice—it seemed to Charlie that he had aged ten years since he saw him last.

"Yes," answered Ward, blushing to his eyes.

"Since when, may I ask?"

"Since last evening, Mr. Goldsborough."

"Did you know, last evening, that Florence was going away?"

"No, sir; I did not even suspect such a thing."

"Mr. Ward—you will excuse the question under the circumstances—are you and my daughter engaged?"

"Oh, no, sir; not at all. There has never been anything particular between us," stammered Charlie.

"Then, perhaps, you will not refuse to return her ring to me. It is a family jewel which I do not care to have in the possession of a stranger."

"Mr. Goldsborough, I am very sorry; but I am not at liberty to resign the ring to any one but Miss Florence."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the banker, with a sneer, "perhaps you are too well aware of its intrinsic value."

"Say what you please, sir; I am under a promise and I shall keep it. I only wish that I could honorably be rid of wearing the ring," he added, indignantly.

And the father went away with the very natural impression that young Ward, in spite of his denial, was or had been engaged to his daughter; but, since the step she had taken, wished to be free from the engagement.

"He should have returned the ring to me, and said so, like a man," he thought.

Charlie was very nervous indeed before the day was over. The interview with Mr. Goldsborough had been sufficiently embarrassing, yet there was another which he dreaded more.

What would Violet think when her eyes fell on the detested ring? For Charlie had been having some very serious thoughts during the day, being driven to reflection by the step which Florence had taken. All day, in his mind, he had been contrasting the two girls; and there was no longer any doubt in it as to which of the two he most admired—for the first time he said to his own heart: "I love Violet, and Violet only. There is none like her, none! How could I ever have thought of Florence in the same breath with her?"

The summer dusk was full of sweetness as he finally took the familiar path to Mr. Vernon's house. It was with a feeling of relief that he saw Violet's white dress glimmering on the piazza, where she was pacing back and forth alone—waiting for him, Charlie thought, with a sudden, sweet, warm thrill of the heart; and he could walk and talk with her, and she would not see, in the evening dusk, the hateful circlet that burned his finger.

"Oh, Charlie!" cried Violet, in her silver voice, coming half-way down the steps to meet him, "I thought you would never come! I have something wonderful, miraculous to tell you! Something you will be so glad and so surprised to hear! Guess!" and as the moon, which had long been brightening in the east, just then poured a golden radiance into the perfumed dark, its light fell on a lovely face all aglow with joy and excitement, ten times more beautiful than it had ever been before.

"Guess!" she repeated, "before you take another step!" and her eyes shone and her cheeks were flushed, and she stamped her little foot with an imperious air as new to her as it was becoming.

"Guess!" answered Charlie, laughing, "do you take me for a Yankee? Well, I guess that Florence has been found," and he glanced covertly at his left hand, hoping that it would prove his conjecture was true, and the wild girl had repented of her freak and returned.

"No," said Violet, almost petulantly, "it is nothing about her. It is something very, very, very important, indeed—to me!"

He looked at her more closely, fairly starting as a thought finally flashed over him.

"Violet, can it be that you have heard any thing about your parentage, to please you so?"

"Ah, I knew you would find out! Charlie, I don't care to go in, do you? Let us walk here on the piazza while I tell you something which papa says I may tell you, and you only."

She took his arm and they paced back and forth in the moonlight; her heart was so full that at first she could find no words; they had gone the length of the piazza twice, when she paused at the further end, and all in a glow of smiles and tears, sobbed out: "Charlie, I have found my mother! I have seen her—kissed her—she has held me in her arms this very day. Oh, Charlie, I am the happiest girl in the whole wide world!"

"You have found your mother!" repeated Charlie, quite sufficiently astonished, and conscious of a jealous pang even in the midst of his surprise. "And is she—do you—she—"

"Yes, yes! She is everything adorable, Charlie. Oh, the loveliest, sweetest mother! Why, if the angels had sent her down in answer to my prayers and dreams she could not be more nearly what I have imagined! I seem already to have known her always! Charlie, you must see her to-morrow. She is at the hotel, Madame D'Eglantine, they call her—for oh, Charlie! she is a French lady! Isn't that strange?"

"What! the French lady, so rich and so elegant, with her maid and her carriage, the best rooms in the house, the landlord flattered to death to have her in his hotel, of whom I have heard so much in the last few days? Madame D'Eglantine your mother, Violet! Well, now, I shall look for the end of the world to come next!"

"You think she is too good for me?" asked the girl, with a pout of the rosy lip that was ravishingly pretty in Charlie's eyes.

"Violet, you know I should not think a queen too good to be your mother, but I am so astonished! It will take me days to realize it. Why has she come, now? Why did she never come before? You see, it is quite enough to puzzle one!"

"True; I have all those things to explain to you—only I don't half understand them yet, myself. However, papa says it is all right; and only in deference to the interests of another person, that he does not tell me all now. He says I shall know everything in a very few weeks. Meantime I am at liberty to share our

secret with you; but you must breathe not a word of it until papa gives you permission. Oh, my beautiful mamma! I wanted to go and sleep in her arms to-night, but papa said that would make people talk; so I am obliged to deny myself her company. Have you seen her, Charlie? Is she not lovely? And now I must tell you all the little I myself know," and clinging to his arm, while they resumed their promenade, she poured out the fullness of her heart into her lover's sympathetic ear.

Her lover! the words are written, for such Charlie Ward felt himself to be before he came in sight of the white-robed girl who awaited him on the piazza, and more and more every moment, as he watched the kindling eyes and heard the silver tones, and saw what a luster happiness added to that pure face.

It caused him a severe struggle with his own impulses not to catch the sweet story-teller to his bosom, and tell her how he loved her, in the same breath with his congratulations. She seemed almost to expect something of the kind, as they finally stood by the rose-wreathed railing, he uttering his warm good-wishes, with faltering voice that made her look down and idly pull to pieces the dewy flowers, while her fair face was fairer than a lily's in the moonlight, and her slim figure, in its soft white dress, palpitated visibly with joy and fear. Better would it have been for both, perhaps, had he yielded to the longing of his heart, and told Violet how dear she was to him.

But two reasons restrained the tender words which trembled on his lips. He felt that this was no time to win from his companion a promise to be his own; she would never suspect him of mercenary motives, but this new mother and Mr. Vernon might very properly question her right, under the circumstances, to speak to her before consulting them. They might say: "You were slow to make up your mind when the shadow of a dark doubt lay over the girl's origin, but now that you find her the inheritor of an ancient lineage and a princess' fortune, you are quick, indeed, to make up your mind that you love her!" Therefore, he felt that he had best keep silence, now, though every sweet look and appealing accent of the confiding girl made the task more difficult. Then, too, there was the ring of Florence Goldsborough! He must wear it, and he must not ask any one, even Violet, that he had been told to wear it—duped into it, in fact, for some not evident purpose.

While Violet, all fair, and soft, and smiling, stood scattering over her white dress the pink petals of the perfumed flowers, and Charlie looked at her with his soul in his eyes, a sudden movement of his hand caused the ring to flash in the moonlight, and drew her glance to it. She caught his hand; he forced a laugh and attempted to draw it away—why is it, in such emergencies, people always do the very things they ought not and do not intend to do?—she held it, and turned the glittering diamonds and the one great, burning opal to the light.

"Charlie, this is Florence's ring!"

"Yes—and the worst of it is, I have promised to wear it until she returns."

Violet's clear eyes attempted to search those of her companion, but he looked away in affected carelessness. When she spoke again her voice was so changed that it startled him—low, cold, sad—and her sweet face was pale and dull.

"Do you know when she will return, Charlie? If so, you should give some clue to her distracted parents. Did she give you this, last night? I know she did, for I noticed it on her hand when she went away."

"She lent me this, last evening; but she did not tell me that she was going away. I know no more about her than you do, Violet. It was foolish of me to take her ring—you know how young people are always jesting—and neither of us meant anything serious by it."

"I suppose you will send it to her parents, then?"

"No," answered Charlie, desperately, feeling that he was being sacrificed to an unlucky promise. "I told Florence, upon my word and honor, I would wear it until I saw her again—and I must. When I said it, I did not dream that I should be in possession of the ring more than twenty-four hours. You believe me, do you not, Violet?"

"Certainly. I can not insult a friend of mine by doubting his word. And I have no reason to doubt yours, Charlie. Florence always favored you above all others," and then she began to talk of other matters—not brightly and blushing as she had been doing—with an air of reserve and weariness.

It was to poor Charlie as if the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, which had sailed across the moon, had chilled the warm earth, and was destined to grow and grow until the heavens were blotted out. Violet shivered, as if she too had grown cold; he was forced to suggest that she had better go inside; she did not object, and so, he wished her a wistful good-night on the steps, and walked away, oppressed and sad.

Violet, who had said to herself an hour before that she was the happiest girl in the land, crept up to her room and threw herself on her bed, sick at heart, jealous, wretched. She had not dreamed there was such passionate emotion to be suffered as the love and despair which for the first time fevered her gentle nature.

"Either Charlie is a heartless trifler, and has deceived Florence as well as me, or there is something between those two!" she said to herself, over and over again.

If the subtle Florence—who had planned for precisely these effects—had poisoned her ring with one of the slow and dreadful, the surely fatal poisons of some oriental sorceress, she could hardly have made the wearer more restless under its pressure; or produced deeper distress in the loving nature of a rival.

Unhappy as the wanderer doubtless was, wherever hiding at that hour, uncertain of her own future, and bent on desperate attainments, her great black eyes would have burned with an evanescent flash of triumph could she have witnessed the parting of the lovers on that evening.

Down in the bottom of her turbulent soul she had vowed to have revenge on Violet for all the ills which had befallen herself, and behold! here was one of her purposes already taking shape and sitting, like a vampire, on the breast of her innocent rival.

But, at least, however miserable, one girl was safe at home, under the shelter of her adopted father's roof, while the other—who knows what dangers followed, like blood hounds, the trail of the other, who had been so rash as to flee from the only safe refuge of girlhood, her mother's arms?

## CHAPTER VI.

## MASQUERADE—WITH A VENGEANCE.

A VERY curious adventure had Redmond Rhodes as he was returning to his residence—facing Gramercy Park, New York—about midnight on the night of the fourth of June. He had been to the Academy of Music, but a few streets below, to listen to Nilsson, in Marguerite—there being a very brief season of

summer opera, and he being passionately fond of music—and was passing up the brown-stone steps—guarded by stately lions—of his stately house, when he stumbled over a prostrate figure lying half on the upper step and half on the threshold.

The figure could not have been there many minutes or it would have been observed by the policeman pacing his rounds, whose steps could now be heard, a few rods away. With an exclamation of mingled surprise and impatience—for Mr. Rhodes took it for granted that the prostrate woman was either intoxicated, or worse—he stooped, and drew her partially into a sitting posture, turning her face toward the moon, which shone down from over the trees in the park with a light like that of a softer day.

At the same time he rang the door-bell rather sharply, with the intention of telling James, his man, to speak to the officer and have the vagabond taken off to the station-house.

But by the time James had opened the door his master had changed his mind about sending for the policeman.

He had seen something very odd indeed when he turned the face, half-hidden in the depths of a gray silk Quaker bonnet, so that the moonbeams fell upon it. He had seen that the figure was scarcely larger than a child's, that the face was pale, the eyes closed, the woman or girl, or whatever she was, unconscious. He had noticed that her dress was that of a neat old lady from the rural regions; probably, from the bonnet, and the prudish shawl pinned about the shoulders, a Quaker; but he had also observed a certain incongruity which had aroused his curiosity: a pair of spectacles had fallen from the closed eyes and a "front" of gray hair had become sadly disarranged, being quite pushed to one side by her fall, revealing an abundance of jetty ringlets that looked strangely out of place against the wrinkles plainly to be seen on the pallid forehead.

"James," said Mr. Rhodes, as his man opened the door and remained stupidly staring at the unexpected tableau on the steps, "help me to take in this poor old lady. She has fallen down and fainted away at my very door."

"She's most likely a vagrant," the careful James ventured to remonstrate; "adn't I best just call a' officer, sir?"

"She is no common tramp, James; I can see that. No, I think we ought to take her in, and make an effort to revive her—at once. She will die if she is neglected many minutes. See! she is too respectable for the station-house."

"Sure enough, sir, ere's her pocket-book—dropped out o' er pocket; an' it seems stuffed full enough," cried the man, picking up a full wallet, as he bent over to assist in raising the woman.

"Perhaps she has arrived on a late train—thought she knew her way to a friend's house, but lost it, and became frightened and tired out. It would be a shame to neglect her. Lift her feet gently, James, and we will place her on the lounge in the library; is there a light there?"

"Yes, sir. My! what little bits o' feet, Mr. Rhodes! She isn't much of a weight, is she, sir?"

"Not much. Now, that is right—here! Run and close and lock the hall-door, James; and then bring me a spoon and a bottle of brandy or wine from the pantry. Quick! And wet a napkin in cold water, James, to lay on her forehead."

The man moved with the soft and steady rapidity of a well-trained servant, to obey these orders, while Mr. Rhodes took off the stiff Quaker bonnet, laid the head of the unconscious stranger low, so as to facilitate the return of the blood to the brain, felt the faint, almost suspended pulse, and vaguely wondered at the dimpled roundness of the little wrist, and at the mass of raven hair which came down when the bonnet was removed, and fell in a rippling tide on either side of the queer little brown, wrinkled face.

His vague wonder increased and grew positive when James brought the wet napkin, and his master, wiping the wrinkled brow with it, wiped every one of those wrinkles away! It did not take long, after that, for Mr. Rhodes to understand the false front and the black hair.

"Poor foolish child!" he muttered, to himself. "Some reckless or unfortunate girl in disguise! I'm afraid this masquerading will prove sorry work for her. It is well she fell into my hands! If that officer had discovered her, she would have figured in the police-court to-morrow."

While thinking this he was working also. He administered brandy in doses of a few drops, rubbed the slender wrists, bathed the smooth forehead; and, being a calm personage, of mature years and cold temperament, was not too flurried to notice critically, while doing these things, the exceeding grace of the trim little form, the velvet fineness of the skin, the extraordinary length of the black lashes which finally began to quiver as they rested on the ivory cheeks.

When a pair of dusky blue eyes suddenly flew wide open and fixed themselves inquiringly on his face, Redmond Rhodes thought to himself, not without displeasure:

"Here is a first-class adventure! I am afraid I have been rash; I am certain that this is an embarrassing situation! What is to follow, I wonder! Ah! the lady must have friends near at hand—she will give me their address—I will send James to take care of her—she will hasten to fly to them—and I shall be out of this awkward predicament."

Easier planned than executed, Mr. Redmond Rhodes!

Among all the staid and irreproachably-respectable citizens of the metropolis, there was none—not one!—who stood more calmly secure and above reproach than this wealthy bachelor, with his forty years, his quiet habits, his sumptuous income and his grim and stately mansion on Gramercy Park. Never, in all his dignified life, had he been guilty of an imprudence.

He had a clear conscience, now, as he sat by the lounge, bathing that fair forehead and giving those tiny doses of brandy; yet he felt that the situation was becoming awkward, especially after the dark, dreamy eyes had opened, and a silver voice, tremulous and sweetly-broken, had murmured:

"Father!"

"I am not your father, child," said Mr. Rhodes, a little hoarsely.

The great black eyes opened a little wider, the curved lips parted—for a moment there was silence on his part, speculation and returning memory on hers—with a gasp, a moan, she struggled into a sitting posture and clasped her two little hands together.

"Take this," ordered Mr. Rhodes, presenting a spoonful of liquor.

She swallowed it, and then her eyes glanced wildly about the beautiful, strange room and back to his anxious countenance.

"Are you a doctor?" she asked. "Where am I? Oh, what has happened to me?"

"Nothing very serious, I trust, my dear young lady. I found you, insensible, on my doorstep, on my return from the opera a few minutes ago."

"Oh, what will you think of me, sir?" she cried, putting her hand to her head to feel for the false front, and darting swift glances about her, at the Quaker bonnet, and at him.

"Nothing very bad; that is, if this is your first escapade, and you promise not to go out masquerading in this style again. Young ladies cannot be too prudent in their conduct—and you are very young, I should say," for a flush of shame was kindling in her cheeks, and as her color came back, with some of the glorious, liquid light to her large eyes, he saw more plainly how much of a girl she was—and what a pretty one! "It is fortunate for you that I discovered you before the policeman came around, or you would be brought up in court for this indiscretion. Now, give me the address of your friends, child; and my man shall go out for carriage and take you home at once."

"I have no friends! I have no home!" she sobbed.

"How is this?" he demanded, sternly.

"At least, I could not go to them to-night, sir. They are far, far away. And I never will go back to them. No, no! I will throw myself into the river first. I cannot tell you all—only that I have run away from my home in disguise—not for any fault or sin of my own!—believe me, I was driven away by the sins of others!—and I came to this great city because I thought I could hide here more effectually than anywhere else. I had money, and I thought it would be easy to find a safe and respectable boarding-place. But they all wanted references, or would not take me because I was a woman, all alone; and it was after dark, and I grew afraid to go to any more houses; and so I walked and walked, and I was so tired and hungry and frightened that at last I knew I must go in somewhere, and I went where the houses looked safe and nice—and I suppose I fainted away as I was going to ring your door-bell, sir."

"You should have told your story to some police-officer. He would have found you a stopping-place. As it is, that step will have to be taken yet to-night. And here it is, one o'clock."

"Do not send me away with a strange officer, at this hour of the night," she begged, flinging herself at his feet before he could reach out a hand to prevent her. "I have gone through so much to-day. You seem kind; do let me stay here until morning. Where is your wife? Surely, she will pity me, and allow me to remain."

"But, my child, I have no wife. There's the difficulty. I would not think of permitting you to leave my roof if it were proper for you to remain."

"Is there not one woman in this great house?" pleaded the young stranger, looking so child-like, so helpless, so bewitching, sad, irresistible, as she smiled up at him through her tears, that Mr. Rhodes felt how cruel it would be to drive her to the cold protection of the city authorities, and turning to James, said, in desperation: "You must call up the housekeeper, James, and put this young lady in her charge. She will be cross, and I fear, not very hospitable; but I will not send this girl away to-night."

"Certainly not, sir; you really couldn't, under the circumstances, sir; and so I will tell Mrs. Plimpton," answered the man, who had listened to every word, and had also been much affected by the sight of beauty in tears at his master's feet.

When the servant departed to summon the housekeeper Mr. Rhodes lifted the little figure to its proper place on the lounge.

"You must have some supper and go to bed," he said, very seriously. "I shall bid you good-night the moment Mrs. Plimpton appears."

"I am so sorry to make you so much trouble! I shall never, never forget your kindness in letting me stay here," was the murmured rejoinder, while two cold little hands caught one of his and a pair of rosy lips pressed on it a quick kiss of gratitude.

"You are too impulsive," said the wise man of forty, moving his chair to a safe distance from the demonstrative stranger. "Even our feelings of gratitude or kindness should be duly restrained. I can easily see how such a quick nature as yours, my child, may have gotten you into trouble. I know that you have been rash and willful—or you would not be here"—his sermon, perhaps, would have been longer had it not been interrupted by the appearance of a severe person, tall, angular, and sharp-visaged.

"Mrs. Plimpton," said the master of the house, rising, "you will oblige me by giving this young lady something to eat, and a room near your own. I found her, unconscious, on the steps; and cannot feel it to be my duty to send her to the station-house. She is a stranger, with no one in the city to whom she can go. You are a good Christian woman and member of the church, Mrs. Plimpton, and I am not afraid to leave her in your hands. I am going to retire, confident that you will see to her, as a sister woman. Perhaps she will tell you her story, and you can advise her in her difficulties. Good-night, mademoiselle," and the haughty Mr. Redmond Rhodes, the honor of whose acquaintance was vainly sought by many a wealthy society belle bowed and smiled very benignly, as he went away, to the unknown little girl he had found on his doorstep.

Mrs. Plimpton dared not disobey the letter of her master's instructions, but she did the spirit. Unguardedly as possible she brought some cold chicken, a biscuit and glass of wine to the "little impostor," as in her own mind she dubbed one whom she knew to be innocent of any guilt, if passionate and rash.

The stranger choked down a few mouthfuls of food, drank the wine—for she still felt dizzy and sick—and followed with faltering steps where the housekeeper led, to a bedroom on the third floor.

"You can sleep here," said Mrs. Plimpton. "I'm across the hall—if you want me in the night, come and knock on my door. Here's your pocketbook; James picked it off the step. There seems to be some money in it; bolt your door; there may be burglars."

"Yes, ma'am, I will," said a meek voice. "I'm so sorry you had to be aroused to attend to me. If I dared, ma'am—if you would not be offended—I would offer you some of this money, in return for the trouble I have made you."

"We, in this house, never take no presents," said the housekeeper, loftily. "But if you've got a good conscience, and have a mind to contribute your mite to my church, for a Sunday offering, I won't refuse it, as a Christian."

The little stranger drew out a five-dollar bill and thrust it, eagerly into her hand, and Mrs. Plimpton went to bed a trifle mollified, though still amazed at her master's folly.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 330.)

## SHE MARRIED THE WRONG MAN.

The sound of the surf of the sand-making ocean, The sails of the ships on the shimmering bay, Bring back to my mind the long days of devotion I gave by the seaside to love and to thee.

'Twas homage man pays, and but once, to a woman, A love that would forfeit the world for a kiss, Ay, and heaven itself, with its joys superhuman, To catch from her smile but one moment of bliss.

How strong was the spell of thy presence! Days ended In weeks, and weeks in their months of repose; And time—it was measured by sunbeams that blended Their light with the dew and the pink of the rose.

Well, 'tis past! that wild waltz of the heart, to whose measure Love's pulses beat madly, till being became A thing of too exquisite torture for pleasure, And sharper than hunger, and fiercer than dame, I chide thee? No, no! Let them bear all the shame of it.

Who chided thy young heart with an infinite fear, I forget not, though rashly I gave thee the blame of it, That the spoil of a heart was atoned by a tear. Like a bride of the East in her splendor they made thee.

With cluster of jewels and cunning of gold; Had they seen in what robes the dark years have arrayed thee, Nor wealth would have purchased, nor beauty been sold.

Men worshipped, maidens envied, as up to the altar, Pale wonder of sweetness, they led thee, a bride, Nor dreamed they who heard thy lips quiver and falter, That the flower of thy young life there withered and died.

And now, like the perfume of roses long faded, That vision of loveliness comes from the past, But the eyes that entreated, the lips that upbraided, No more shall reproach thee—oh, broken at last! Should the sails of these ships by the tempest be shredded.

The strong ribs be crushed by the sea in its rage, The wreck were no greater than thine, who wert wedded To folly in youth and misfortune in age.

What haunt of the city conceals thy gray sorrow? Thy children they cry in the streets for their bread, And for thee there remains no bright hope for the morrow, But only the peace of the sleep of the dead.

## OLD DAN RACKBACK.

## The Great Extirminator!

OR,

## THE TRIANGLE'S LAST TRAIL!

BY OLL COOMES.

## CHAPTER XXV.

FOES THEY GRAPPLE—FRIENDS THEY GREET.

IDAHO TOM and Darcy Cooper made their way in the direction from whence the sound of the conflict came, and soon reached the combatants. They were in a little opening where the grass had been drowned out by the water, but was now dry. The rangers could see the combatants but faintly, yet plain enough to see that it was not an Indian that engaged Dan and Humility, but a tall, powerful man who had both the old ranger and his dog in limbo.

Dan was lying prone upon his stomach, while his big adversary sat astride him with Humility grasped by the throat and almost dead from strangulation.

"By the ram's horn that blowed down old Jericho!" Tom and Darcy heard the unknown enemy exclaim, as he fiercely shook the dog, "I'll sha—ke the tar—nal tail off ahind the ears—thar, now, lay thar, yod tarmal brute!" and he dashed the dog to earth apparently lifeless.

At this juncture the struggle assumed a different phase. Old Dan, by a sudden movement, succeeded in flopping his enemy off his back, when both rose to their feet. Dan made a drive at his enemy, who had lost his hat in the fight, and, catching him by the hair, jerked him full length upon the earth.

"Gosh dim it, man!—horn!—Joshua!—Jericho!" bawled the enemy, "you're skulpin' me! Let up, I say, for I'll be eternally blasted if this isn't—oh, Lord! Can it be her? Sabina! Sabina! for the love of life let go—I'll promise obedience—to love, cherish and obey—Lord!"

"It's old Kit Bandy, Tom," said Darcy Cooper.

"Hold! hold, here, men!" cried Tom, leaping into the opening and seizing them, "hold, for you are friends, not foes!"

"Heavens! you don't say?" cried Dan, releasing his hold on old Kit's hair and starting back agast.

"Cats and furies!" cried Bandy, scrambling to his feet, "thar 's a mistake. I knowed it. Ingins don't fight like ole wild-cat women."

"By Judea! ole long-legs," returned Dan, "you don't want to fool around a tornado in any sich a way ag'in."

"Oh, horn of Joshua! I never had sich a hair-pullin' since me and old Sabina parted; but, Thomas, how do you do?" and Kit grasped Idaho Tom by the hand; "glad to meet ye, boys—been workin' all night to git over here—had to extarminate three or four Ingins git-in, then come dogged nigh killin' that feller and his dog. That darned bound-critter took a hull hunk out of my ham, but I reckon now I choked the stuffin' outen him."

Kit and Tom greeted each other with a cordial shake of the hands, then the latter said:

"It's a wonder you are alive, Kit; for you have been fighting with the redoubtable Dakota Dan, the ranger."

"Oh, great horn that bustud up old Jericho! do you mean it? Is it a fact



your dog war no sich a critter as that Humility."

"He wa'n't, eh?"

"No; I'll bet he couldn't chaw up a gun-barrel."

"Humph! I didn't say he could."

"Nor whoop a nest of grizzlies."

"I'd like to see the dog that could."

"Nor run a mile so quick that you could see a dog on both ends of the mile at the same time?"

"No; that's faster than greased lightning."

"Nor bark so loud that the water splashed in the river?"

"You're gittin' preposterous."

"Not a bit of it, for my dog Humility can do all that, and more too. Jist throw him yer revolvers and hear him crunch 'em up."

"Oh, bazzoo of Ananias!" groaned Kit, "if you ain't the most nateral transfiggerator of the truth I ever met. Dan-yil, I'll bet you're a pu'fect stranger to the gospel truth and unadulterated water. Did you ever even think the truth, Dan-yil?"

"Yas," drawled Dan. "I jist this minute thought you war the dog-gonestest yit critter that ever hopped on two feet, outside of a cage."

"Tom and Darcy could hold in no longer, and burst into a laugh."

"Shake agin, Dan-yil! Guess we can bunk together without contaminatin' each other's morals or beauty. But now let me ax you feller what in thunderation are you doin' in here, with a million red-skins around ye?"

"Tryin' to git out," was Dan's laconic answer.

"Wal, ahem!" stammered Kit, "if you've the trouble gittin' out that I had gittin' in, you'll have some choice fun."

"That's what we want," said Tom; "but what do you think the prospect is, Kit?"

"Good, to git your jackets warmed. I've been layin' under sound of Prairie Paul's voice ever since dark; and I heard him send orders around to fire the prairie on the north and river side at about midnight—he war to give the signal with his horn—three stout peals."

"That's as I feared," said Dan; "but did you I am their object, Brandy?"

"Why, arter the fire war started, they were to mass their hull force on the west and south sides, and when the flames drive you out, they'll plug it to you hissin' hot. That's their program, and to tell ye these facts, hev I fought, bled and died to git in here. And what's more, I've got to git out again right away."

"Why have you?"

"Well, the other night when I got separated from you in crossing the ford—but I'll tell you about that another time. To-day when I got down onto the plains, what did I find in a little motte but a woman—a gal—an angel."

Tom started, and approached nearer to Kit, as though he was in doubt as to what he had heard.

"Found a girl, did you say?" he asked.

"Yes, a gal, a sweet, purty girl, half-starved and chilled to death. But I give her some food out of Prairie Paul's saddle-bags, what I got up to the ford when, thro' mistake, I mounted the wrong horse, and I wrapped her in a blanket and conducted her homewards. When we see'd the predicament you war in, I left her—I had to—on the summit of a certain ridge, with instruction to stay thar till I come back."

"I daresay it is the girl we rescued, Dan, from the outlaws' wagon," said Idaho Tom.

"What's that, Tom?" exclaimed Kit; "did you say you rescued a gal from a robbers' wagon?"

Tom narrated his and Dan's adventure on the prairie the night previous.

"That's the same gal, Thomas—the same gal."

"Did you learn her name, Kit?"

"Ya-as, Thomas, I did; and, come to think, she told me tell you that it was Christie Dorne."

"Christie Dorne?" cried Tom, betraying the deepest emotion; "Kit, you don't mean to tell me this for the truth?"

"I do, Tom—anyhow, that's what she told me. Her folks live down at Mennovale on the Niobrara, and some time ago her brother started off up this way with a party under one Major Loomis, to hunt buffalo; and he had been gone but a day or two, when a party of reputed hunters, with a wagon, four horses, and a nigger driver, come that way, stopped a day or two in the settlement, then passed on. And two days later, she war kidnapped by two of the villains, carried away and placed in a cage in the wagon, with a nigger wench who waited on her, and kept her asleep most of the time with some kind of a drug."

"My God! why didn't I know this sooner?" cried Idaho Tom, in the greatest excitement.

"Kit, send me to her assistance—I must go! Give me the course and directions to find her, and I will ride to her through fire and death."

"You know her, don't you, Tom?"

"Ask me no questions, Kit; but please do as I request."

"Wal, now, I see you mean it, boy; and if you will, I'll tell you the way. You can't miss her, I know. You want to pass through the enemy's line, keep straight down the river to the mouth of the fast creek, turn up the creek and follow it south till you strike an old Injin trail, then follow that trail west till you strike the gal; she war to stay by the trail on the ridge."

"Boys, I hope you may make good your escape from here," said Tom, and hurrying back to the main party, he mounted his horse and galloped away, at a furious speed, down the river.

Savage yells and the report of fire arms told when he reached the enemy's line, but whether he passed alive, his friends had no means of ascertaining.

"That man and that gal knows each other," said Kit Bandy—"ay, they love each other."

"I daresay they do, Kit," said Darcy Cooper, "for more than once have we heard the name, Christie, pronounced by his lips when he slept. I assure you Tom loves that girl. We have often remarked that Tom was being drawn east of the mountains by some influence stronger than the love of adventure. His object has been to reach the Missouri river by passing through the Black Hills, and down the Niobrara valley; and I am as well satisfied now as I want to be, that it was to see this girl, Christie, that he planned this trip across the mountains."

"Ay, that's it!" sighed Dakota Dan; "love in a young man's heart is a powerful thing, and past findin' out. I war never afflicted but once that way in my young days, but the object of my love married another feller, and when I heard last that she war the mother of sixteen children, I jist thought what a deluge I'd escaped."

"Dan-yil, you war more fortunate than I," said old Kit; "when old Sabina and I war harness'd together for life, we war the hap—there, by heavens! goes the robber's horn! Now, boys, look out, the tug of war is comin'!"

The next instant a hundred tongues of flame pierced the gloom at as many points north and

east of them. Great volumes of black smoke went rolling and tumbling into the sky, and a moment later a continuous wall of flame came sweeping down the plain—a mighty billow of roaring, seething fire!

## CHAPTER XXVI.

A JOYOUS MEETING BUT SAD PARTING.

IDAHO TOM observed no silence in approaching the enemy's line, but rode at the top of his animal's speed. And fortunately for him, the Indians were concentrating their forces on the south side preparatory to firing the plain, and the confusion created thereby drowned the sound of his horse's hoofs; and not until he was through their lines did they discover his flight.

They fired a few random shots after him, but all fell wide of their mark. A few warriors gave chase, but as they could follow only by sound, the noise of their own animals' feet drowned all noise made by the fugitive's, and so they were compelled to relinquish the chase and return to their friends.

Tom continued on down the river, as directed, until he reached the creek; then he turned and rode southward along the latter stream until he reached the old Indian trail running in a nor-nor-west direction over the hill. He followed this path nearly a mile, when he found himself on a high ridge, and near where he supposed the maiden was concealed. Here he dismounted, and in order to see more distinctly, he stooped down and glanced along the plain; when, sight of rapture! he beheld an object dimly outlined against the murky sky. It was but a short distance away, and leading his horse he advanced toward it, calling out:

"Christie! Christie?"

"Is it you, Mr. Bandy?" a half-subdued voice asked.

Tom's heart seemed to rise up and choke him, and for a moment his brain was dizzy with delight. Recovering himself, however, he answered:

"No, Christie, my darling girl; it is Idaho Tom."

A little cry and the fluttering of feet through the grass followed, then the two embraced each other with that infinite joy and rapturous silence of "two hearts that beat as one."

For fully a minute a deep stillness, broken only by Christie's sobs, reigned supreme. Alone under the shadows of night the lovers held speechless communion through medium of love's instinct.

Tom was the first to break the holy silence.

"Oh, my darling!" he exclaimed, "why did I not know it was you, the night I rescued you from that prison-wagon on the plain south of here?"

Christie could only answer in sobs.

"I feel provoked at my own stupidity in that matter," Tom continued, "for never until Kit Bandy told me it was you, did I dream of such a thing. And had you known it was I, you would not have left me."

"No, no, dear Tom," Christie said, her trembling voice full of the confidence and pathos of love.

"You can rest easy now, love, for I think you are safe, for a time at least."

"I feel so," Tom, she answered, "but, oh, how I have suffered since I was taken from home! I am almost distracted, Tom—about exhausted in body and mind."

"My poor darling," Tom said, kissing her cold brow, "you shall suffer no more, God willing. Little did I think, when we parted a year ago at Virginia City, and when I wrote you that I would make a trip this way during the fall, that we would meet under such trying circumstances. But, Christie, you are shivering in this chill air—here, draw this blanket closer around you—there now."

"I am not as chilly, Tom, as I was. I have been walking about to keep warm since Kit Bandy left me alone. Some horsemen passed me while ago and I was greatly afraid that they would discover me. But when they passed me, you don't know how relieved I was. My cheeks fairly burned and my fingers tingled with heat."

"Kit Bandy told me, Christie, how you came to be a lonely fugitive on this plain; and I believe he told me your friends were away upon a hunting excursion."

"Yes; they all went away with Major Loomis on a hunting excursion away up north. Brother Herbert wanted me to accompany them, as Major Loomis' daughter and four other of the company's lady friends were going. But I declined, through fear that you would come, Tom, while I was away."

"My dear Christie, then you have suffered all this through your undying love for me. Oh, that I could repay you a thousandfold for all this patient suffering."

"For you, Tom, I would pass through all again," she said, nestling to his throbbing heart.

"God bless you, darling; you need never risk anything to hold my love for you. Not even death could sever the tie that binds us together, in one sense of the word."

"I believe it, Tom; for all my friends have told me, time and again, that you would soon forget me—that your love was but a boyish infatuation that time would banish from your mind and heart."

"When will I be considered a man, anyway?" replied Tom; "if not until I throw aside my boyish spirit, then I will never be a man. Years ago they told me that I was possessed of a boyish infatuation for Miss Zoe Leland, the maid of Lake Tahoe. But then I was a boy, even in years; now I am four-and-twenty—a man in years. Then my mind and heart were not fixed—now they are. I took the advice and counsel of my old friend, Zedekiah Deed, and lived a different life from that date—lived to make myself worthy of your love, Christie. But, Christie, did you not recognize old Kit Bandy?"

"Yes, Tom; I recognized him the moment he told me his name. He saw that I recognized—knew him; and tried hard to find out how I had learned who he was. He never once mistook who I was."

"I have been with him some time with the same result," added Tom.

"Then the secret of that memorable night has been well kept," said Christie; "though there have been times—*one in particular*, Tom—when it seemed as though I would be compelled to unload my breast of the secret to brother Herbert, in order to save my life. And there are times when it haunts my soul like the shadow of some awful crime; but only when I have thought that if not one of those persons, who were at the mine that night, could ever be found to bear witness to—But, Tom, God knows there is nothing I have done in the past that I regret. But I have wanted to break that secret so often for more than one reason. I have been besieged by the avowed love of a gentleman named Farwell, who, time and again, has asked me to be his wife. Brother Herbert favors him, and even went so far as to make arrangements to conceal what he calls my disgrace and shame. Oh, Tom!" she said, with bitter anguish, "I can stand it no longer!"

"My poor darling, you shall not suffer longer. If your brother is actuated by selfish and

resentful motives, I shall no longer court his friendship, but take you away. There is a point where patience ceases to be a virtue, and I think that point has been reached in our case. I shall take you home, Christie; then plainly tell your brother serious facts, and with you and all the evidence of your disgrace, take you away. But what are his objections to me now?"

"He looks upon you as an adventurer, and often speaks of Idaho Tom, the Outlaw of Silverland."

"He may have cause to speak more kindly of me some day," Tom observed.

"I hope so, at least—oh, dear! what is the meaning of that, Tom?"

She pointed east where the whole heavens were suddenly lit with a red glare.

"The outlaws and savages have fired the plain to burn out my friends, old Dakota Dan and Kit Bandy, who are concealed in the tall grass on the river bottom. I am afraid they will have a narrow escape. Ten young men, who, all unconscious of what I came hither for, accompanied me across the mountains, are now in imminent peril, surrounded by fire and savages. Ah! it is an awful fire—growing brighter and brighter. You can hear its roar and crackle from here."

True enough, the light glared into the heavens and around—even reaching the spot where the friends stood. It enabled Tom to see the outlines of Christie's face. It looked white and wild, but all its former beauty was there. The great brown eyes, the silken lashes now wet with tears; the pretty lips and dimpled chin—all set in a wealth of soft brown hair—were the same as when he had parted with her a year previous. Only the rosy glow of her cheeks was gone, but he knew that troubles and trials, through which she had passed so recently, had blanched her face and filled her young heart with fear.

As the light grew brighter, Christie looked up and searched her lover's face with a fond, admiring light in her eyes, and an affectionate smile beaming upon every feature of her pretty face. She saw that he had changed some during the year. His features were more firm and set in the strength of mature manhood. A heavier mustache shaded his handsome, expressive mouth; and his complexion had been changed to the sun and wind. Otherwise, he was the same fine, handsome, brave-hearted Idaho Tom.

For some time the lovers stood regarding each other with joy and pleasure, and epitomizing some strange events that had happened in the lives of each since they had parted—events that the sequel of our story will make known, no doubt to the surprise of the reader.

In the moment of their happiness and joy, the young folks became almost totally oblivious to what was passing around them; but they were suddenly reminded that dangers surrounded them by the sound of horses' feet on the plain to the north of them.

Nothing was visible at the time, but a moment later a horse appeared over the crest of the hill plainly outlined against the red, glaring light from the burning prairie. It was riderless, yet Tom could see that it was heavily loaded, and a second glance told him that it was one of his own pack-animals that he had lost that day. The appearance of the horse alone gave him no uneasiness, but when he saw half a dozen Indians and outlaws suddenly appear in swift pursuit of it, he started with a shudder, and drew Christie closer to his heart.

"Oh, Tom!" she exclaimed, "if they should see us, we will be killed."

"Hush, hush, my darling girl! They will pass us, I hope, without seeing us," said Tom, in an undertone.

They could now see the enemy quite distinctly. They were not over thirty rods away. There were three white men and three savages. They could see the half-nude forms of the latter bent forward in their anxiety to overtake the fleeing animal; they could see the plumes on their tufted heads swaying in the wind, and their blankets whipping about their shoulders. And close behind the red-skins rode the three white men, the broad brims of their hats flared up in front; their long beards floating about their faces in the current of air; their heels tinkling with rowels and their lips reeking with the most horrible oaths.

Tom stood silent as a statue, his eyes following the swift-moving figures. He could feel Christie's heart beating wildly against his own—the only evidence he had that she existed at all, so silent and immovable was she in her fear.

The enemy would pass within seventy-five yards of our young friends, and so great was the excitement of the chase that Tom felt certain they would pass without seeing them; but his hopes were suddenly dispelled, and his heart sickened with fear and disappointment. His own horse seemed to have recognized its hard-chased friend, and uttered a shrill neigh that turned the fugitive horse and brought it directly down toward them.

"Oh, fatal mishap!" cried Tom, "they are coming down upon us! Christie, mount my horse and flee—do not refuse me, dear girl—you must flee! I can save myself—I will fight my way through!"

"Tom, they will kill you!" she cried, in anguish of heart; "let me die with you."

"He made no reply, but lifting her in his strong arms as though she had been a child, he placed her on the back of his horse.

"Go, Christie!" and may God speed you!" he said.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, the maiden took up the rein—Tom spoke to his horse, and like a deer it lanced away through the night with its half-unconscious rider.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"PLANTING A LIVING MAN."

AT the same moment that Christie's horse sped away, the fleeing pack-animal came up, and as it passed Tom he leaped out and seized it by the reins, partially checking its flight, and then endeavored to throw himself upon its back. But, between the continued bounding of the frightened animal and the forward Indian, his escape was prevented entirely.

The savage dashed up and seized the animal by the bits on the side from Tom. Tom drew his revolver and shot the savage dead. The others by this time were upon him, and in rapid succession he fired upon them. An outlaw threw himself from his horse, and running up behind the ranger, threw his powerful arms around him, pinning his arms at his side. The next moment his two companions came to his assistance.

In a minute more, Tom lay bound and helpless on the earth, while his outlaw captors stood over him cursing with impotent fury and heaping all sorts of anathemas upon the head of the young ranger. And when one of them recognized him as the leader of the band that had camped in the hills, he was threatened with every fate their maddened brains could conceive. He was relieved of all his weapons and every thing of value about his person, even to a picture of the sweet, fair girl who had just

left him. But Tom bore all their ill-treatment with unflinching fortitude and cool defiance.

One thing only gave him mental relief in the midst of his troubles; he knew no one was in pursuit of Christie, for he had slain the three Indians, and the three outlaws were before him. This fact encouraged him to hope for her escape, and in case she succeeded in finding friends, he knew she would send them to his relief. But he knew assistance must come soon, for his desperate captors would not long be encumbered with a prisoner—especially with him whose life they had sought for so many days. Already he could hear them openly discussing the disposition that should be made of him. One was in favor of shooting him on the spot, another was in favor of handing him over to the tender mercy of the captain, while the third proposed something else. But none of the suggestions met the approval of the worthy trio, and so they stepped aside to consult in secret. Their decision was soon made; then they all walked back to where he lay.

"I say, young man," said one of the three, "war that pussan that fled from you just now a man or woman?"

"Well, sir, what do you think about it?" was Tom's cool reply.

"Well, we think it war a woman; but then you've got to answer my question, or I'll shove a persuader, in the shape of a boot-toe, into your ribs."

"You will have to go and see," was Tom's defiant answer.

The outlaw kicked him in the side till he groaned, but the main force of the blow was arrested by the young ranger's broad belt.

"It's no use to waste time with a stubborn mule, and as we don't want to kill him here, let's 'plant' him low and tight, and then go in search of his companion. We don't want to let one of them get away, for one can do as much damage with his tongue as a dozen."

So saying, they proceeded to work. One of them took from the back of the captured pack-horse the pack of mining tools strapped thereon. Selecting a spade, he began sinking a hole in the ground about two feet square. He worked diligently for several minutes, being finally relieved by a comrade.

Tom shuddered, for he fully comprehended the intention of the villains.

Down and down the pit was sunk, the men laboring by turns with all their strength. Finally one of them took a piece of a lariar and measured Tom's body from the heel to the nape of the neck, marking the length on the rope by tying a knot in it. Then they let the measure down in the hole, but finding it of insufficient depth, they dug away, repeating the measure, off and on, until the man in the hole made the announcement that it was "deep enough."

Tom's inward fears now assumed the most painful condition, but he allowed no word or look to betray his emotions to his inhuman enemies.

The outlaws, having tightened the ropes around his legs and arms, lifted him in their arms and carried him to the pit, into which they lowered him, feet foremost. When his feet touched the bottom, his chin rested on the surface of the ground.

"Now, then," said one of the demons, "shovel in the dirt around the bulb."

This one of them began to do, while another, provided with a pick-handle, stamped the dirt down solid around their living victim. It required but a few minutes to fill the hole around the young ranger, leaving nothing but his head uncovered.

"Now, then, Sir Ranger," said one of the villains, "I think you are firmly planted, and will stay thar till we come again."

The trio now threw aside their tools, mounted their horses and rode away in pursuit of Christie.

And Idaho Tom again found himself alone, as firmly planted on the plain as though he had been rooted there. He could scarcely move a muscle, and he found breathing difficult, so tight was the earth around his body.

The light of the burning prairie was growing brighter around him, and the pungent odor of the burning grass filled the atmosphere.

The report of firearms came from the direction of the river, mingled with the din of battle and the surge of the night-wind.

With his ear pressed close against the earth, he could hear the thump and thunder of hooved feet upon it, and the roar and crackle of the advancing flame.

The young ranger could turn his head slightly to either side. He could see the white smoke, filled with millions of sparks, mounting into the gloom of heaven; and no difference which way he turned his eyes, he could see the horrible, ghastly faces of the three dead savages staring with stony eyes toward him.

Idaho Tom now experienced a sensation of fear that he had never felt before; and the pretty, sad face of Christie came up in his memory to mock his helplessness instead of cheering him. There was not the shadow of a chance for his escape from the terrible "prairie stock" without the intervention of human aid. He was worse than buried alive. He was not only exposed to the attacks of the ravenous wolves howling in the distance, but to the seething prairie-fire sweeping down toward him before a strong wind. Death seemed inevitable within the same hour that life and love seemed so sweet and promising. His darling Christie was a fugitive upon the great, trackless plain, doomed almost to certain death or captivity, while he was suffering all the tortures of a living death.

More seriously than ever did the young man begin to think of the great Hereafter. His face grew pale, and in the red glare of the burning plain it looked ghastly. He closed his eyes and turned his face toward heaven. His lips moved in prayer—he prayed for Christie, his friends, himself—he prayed sincerely and with depth of holy reverence in his voice and soul.

Suddenly he was startled by a sound like feet running through the grass. He opened his eyes and glanced around—an icy shudder thrilled through his half-chilled form. He saw the blaze of the prairie fire leaping and lancing up over the crest of the hill not more than half a mile away, while, clearly outlined in its red glare he beheld a huge, shaggy animal. It was not over twenty paces from him, and stood glaring toward him with blazing green eyes, dripping mouth and lolling tongue—its bushy tail moving slowly from side to side with the measured lashes of a panther's.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 324.)

BLESSED is the man who knows enough to keep his mouth shut. Some people live sixty years without learning the art. Indeed, the older they grow the wider their mouths open. A man or woman who is a gabbler at forty-five is a dreadful affliction to a house, or church, or a community. There are two things this age needs to learn—when to say nothing, and when it says anything to say it well. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain."

## THE HEART-CHILD.

BY JOHN GOSSIP.

In every land, 'neath every sun,  
Where true Love is or is to be,  
It is a child that every one  
May know and fondle tenderly.

Such long, long days Love spends in thought  
Before his lips can utter sound!  
And often they who long have sought  
Know not that it is Love they've found!

It is, I ween, a cruel thing,  
When Love is learning how to speak,  
To spurn and fling him back his ring,  
And say, "You were the first to seek!"

## Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

## THE PROFESSIONAL ARENA.

THE first Eastern tour of the Western club nines of the League Association, which was commenced on May 23d, terminated on June 17th, and singularly enough it ended with a tie score of victories for the two sections, the four Western nines having won twenty-four games, and the four Eastern nines the same number in their contests together, as the appended record shows. It will be remembered by our readers that in the first series of contests of the campaign in which the four Western nines contended with each other, the Chicago club won ten games and lost but two, each of the clubs playing in twelve games, the St. Louis nine proving to be the only one of the four which could successfully cope with Chicago. In the series of contests with the Eastern nines the Chicago "White Stocking" team achieved the same degree of success, they winning ten out of the twelve games played on the Eastern tour, the only nine to win a game from them being the Hartford and Mutual teams, and these nines the Chicago defeated in two out of the three games they played with them. The first week's play of the tour ended with a score of six to six of won games. In the second week, however, the West had the advantage by eight to four of won games; at the close of the third week the score stood again at six to six, leaving the Western nines still in the van in the aggregate of won games; but in the fourth week's play the Eastern nines recovered their lost ground by winning eight games to the Western nine's four, thus closing the series with the totals at twenty-four to twenty-four of won games, as the following table shows:

WEST.		Games Won.
Chicago vs. Hartford	.....	2
" vs. Boston	.....	3
" vs. Athletic	.....	3
" vs. Mutual	.....	3
Total	.....	10
St. Louis vs. Mutual	.....	2
" vs. Athletic	.....	3
" vs. Hartford	.....	0
" vs. Boston	.....	2
Total	.....	7
Louisville vs. Athletic	.....	2
" vs. Mutual	.....	1
" vs. Boston	.....	1
" vs. Hartford	.....	0
Total	.....	6
Cincinnati vs. Boston	.....	0
" vs. Hartford	.....	1
" vs. Mutual	.....	0
" vs. Athletic	.....	0
Total	.....	1
Grand total	.....	24

EAST.		Games Won.
Hartford vs. Chicago	.....	1
" vs. Cincinnati	.....	2
" vs. St. Louis	.....	3
" vs. Louisville	.....	3
Total	.....	9
Mutual vs. St. Louis	.....	1
" vs. Louisville	.....	2
" vs. Cincinnati	.....	3
" vs. Chicago	.....	1
Total	.....	7
Boston vs. Cincinnati	.....	3
" vs. Chicago	.....	0
" vs. Louisville	.....	0
" vs. St. Louis	.....	1
Total	.....	4
Athletic vs. Louisville	.....	1
" vs. St. Louis	.....	0
" vs. Chicago	.....	0
" Cincinnati	.....	3
Total	.....	4
Grand total	.....	24

It is singular that the only game won by the Cincinnati nine should have been one of the series with the strongest of the Eastern nines. To the surprise of those who witnessed the fine play of the St. Louis nine with the Mutuals in their first two games together, the "Browns" did not win a game, while in Connecticut, both the Hartford and New Haven nines defeating them. Had they played up to the mark they are capable of doing their defeats would not exceed that of the Chicago nine.







## GOOD-BY.

BY HARVEY HOWARD.

Good-by; God bless you, and may peace  
Forever dwell within that breast  
Which has so oft to mine been pressed  
And made no effort for release.

Good-by; God bless you, and hereafter  
May those soft lips that mine have kissed,  
Those sweet lips I have sadly missed,  
Send forth but joyousness and laughter.

Sweet one, (once more I call you so),  
If ever God should trouble send  
And you should need a faithful friend,  
Let me that faithfulness bestow.

But, no; I ask not that one bliss.  
Your friends are many, faithful, true;  
But what to me are friends, when you  
From out the crowd of friends I miss?

Once more—good-by, a long good-by  
To you and happiness and love.  
But if there is a heaven above,  
Then we shall love there, you and I.

## LA MASQUE.

The Vailed Sorceress;  
OR,  
THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

A TALE OF ILLUSION, DELUSION AND MYSTERY.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,  
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "THE TWIN  
SISTERS," "AN AWFUL MYSTERY,"  
"ERMINIE," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER X.

THE PAGE, THE FIRES AND THE FALL.

The night was intensely dark when Sir Norman got into it, once more, and to any one else would have been intensely dismal, but to Sir Norman all was bright as the fair hills of Beulah. When all is bright within, we see no darkness without; and just at that moment our young knight had got into one of those green and golden glimpses of sunshine that here and there checker the life's rather dark pathway, and with Leoline beside him would have thought the dreary shores of the Dead Sea itself a very paradise.

It was now near midnight, and there was an unusual concourse of people in the streets, waiting for St. Paul's to give the signal to light the fires. He looked around for Ormiston; but Ormiston was nowhere to be seen—horse and rider had disappeared. His own horse stood tethered where he had left him; and anxious as he was to ride back to the ruin, and see the play played out, could not resist the temptation of lingering a brief period in the city, to behold the grand spectacle of the myriad fires. Many persons were hurrying toward St. Paul's to witness it from the dome; and consigning his horse to the care of the sentinel on guard at the house opposite, he joined them, and was soon striding along, at a tremendous pace, toward the great cathedral. Ere he reached it, his loud-tongued clock tolled twelve, and all the other churches, one after another, took up the sound, and the witching hour of midnight rung and re-rung from end to end of London town. As if by magic, a thousand forked tongues of fire shot up at once into the blind, black night, turning almost in an instant the darkened face of the heavens to an inflamed, glowing red. Great fires were blazing around the cathedral when they reached it, but no one stopped to notice them, but only hurried on the faster to gain their point of observation. Sir Norman just glanced at the magnificent pile—for the old St. Paul's was even more magnificent than the new, and then followed after the rest, through many a gallery, tower and spiral staircase till the dome was reached. And there a grand and mighty spectacle was before him—the whole of London swaying and heaving in one great sea of fire. From one end to the other the city seemed wrapped in sheets of flame, and every street, and alley, and lane within it shone in a lurid radiance far brighter than noonday. All along the river fires were gleaming, too; and the whole sky had turned from black to blood-red crimson. The streets were alive and swarming—it could scarcely be believed that the plague-infested city contained half so many people, and all were unusually hopeful and animated; for it was popularly believed that these fires would effectually check the pestilence. But the angry fiat of a Mighty Judge had gone forth, and the tremendous arm of the destroying angel was not to be stopped by the puny hand of man. It has been said the weather for weeks was unusually brilliant, days of cloudless sunshine, nights of cloudless moonlight, and the air was warm and sultry enough for the month of August in the tropics. But now, while they looked, a vivid flash of lightning from what quarter of the heavens no man knew, shot athwart the sky, followed by another and another, quick, sharp and blinding. Then one great drop of rain fell like molten lead on the pavement, then a second and a third—quicker, faster, and thicker, until down it rushed in a perfect deluge. It did not wait to rain; it fell in floods—in great, slanting sheets of water, as if the very flood-gates of heaven had opened for a second deluge. No one ever remembered to have seen such torrents fall, and the populace fled before it in wildest dismay. In five minutes every fire, from one extremity of London to the other, was quenched in the very blackness of darkness, and on that night the deepest gloom and terror reigned throughout the city. It was clear the hand of an avenging Deity was in this, and He who had rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah had not lost his might. In fifteen minutes the terrific flood was over; the dismal clouds cleared away, a pale, fair, silver moon shone serenely out, and looked down on the black, charred heaps of ashes strewn through the streets of London. One by one the stars, that all night had been obscured, glanced and sparkled over the sky, and lit up with their soft, pale light the doomed and stricken town. Everybody had quitted the dome in terror and consternation; and now Sir Norman, who had been lost in awe, suddenly bethought him of his ride to the ruin, and hastened to follow their example. Walking rapidly, not to say recklessly, along, he abruptly knocked against some one sauntering leisurely before him, and nearly pitched headlong on the pavement. Recovering his center of gravity by a violent effort, he turned to see the cause of the collision, and found himself accosted by a musical and foreign-accented voice.

"Pardon," said the sweet, and rather feminine tones, "it was quite an accident, I assure you, monsieur. I had no idea I was in any body's way."

Sir Norman looked at the voice, or rather in the direction which it came, and found it proceeded from a lad in gay livery, whose clear, colorless face, dark eyes, and exquisite features, were by no means unknown. The boy seemed to recognize him at the same moment, and slightly touched his gay cap.

"Ah! it is Sir Norman Kingsley! Just the very person, but one, in the world that I wanted most to see."

"Indeed! And, pray, whom have I the honor of addressing?" inquired Sir Norman, deeply edified by the cool familiarity of the accoster.

"They call me Hubert—for want of a better name, I suppose," said the lad, easily. "And may I ask, Sir Norman, if you are shod with seven-leagued boots, or if your errand is one of life and death, that you stride along at such a terrific rate?"

"And what is that to you?" asked Sir Norman, scandalized and indignant at his free-and-easy impudence.

"Nothing; only I should like to keep up with you, if my legs were long enough; and as they're not, and as company is not easily to be had in these forlorn streets, I should feel obliged to you if you would just slacken your pace a trifle, and take me in tow."

The boy's face in the moonlight, in everything but expression, was exactly that of Leoline, to which softening circumstance may be attributed Sir Norman's yielding to the request, and allowing the page to keep alongside.

"I've met you once before to-night?" inquired Sir Norman, after a prolonged and wondering stare at him.

"Yes; I have a faint recollection of seeing you and Mr. Ormiston on London Bridge, a few hours ago, and, by the way, perhaps I may mention I am now in search of that same Mr. Ormiston."

"You are? And what may you want of him, pray?"

"Just a little information of a private character—perhaps you can direct me to his whereabouts."

"Should be happy to oblige you, my dear boy, but, unfortunately, I cannot. I want to see him myself, if I could find any one good enough to direct me to him. Is your business pressing?"

"Very—there is a lady in the case; and such business, you are aware, is always pressing. Probably you have heard of her—a youthful angel, in virgin white, who took a notion to jump into the Thames, not a great while ago."

"Ah!" said Sir Norman, with a start that did not escape the quick eyes of the boy. "And what do you want of her?"

The page glanced at him.

"Perhaps you know her yourself, Sir Norman? If so, you will answer quite as well as your friend, as I only want to know where she lives."

"I have been out of town to-night," said Sir Norman, evasively, "and there may have been more ladies than one jumped into the Thames, during my absence. Pray, describe your angel in white."

"I did not notice her particularly myself," said the boy, with easy indifference, "as I am not in the habit of paying much attention to young ladies who run wild about the streets at night and jump promiscuously into rivers. However, this one was rather remarkable for being dressed as a bride, having long black hair, and a great quantity of jewelry about her, and looking very much like me. Having said she looks like me, I need not add she is handsome."

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" murmured Sir Norman, meditatively. "Perhaps she is a relative of yours, Master Hubert, since you take such an interest in her, and she looks so much like you."

"Not that I know of," said Hubert, in his careless way. "I believe I was born minus these common domestic afflictions, relatives; and I don't take the slightest interest in her, either; don't think it!"

"Then why are you in search of her?"

"For a very good reason—because I've been ordered to do so."

"By whom—your master?"

"My Lord Rochester," said that nobleman's page, waving off the insinuation by a motion of his hand and a little displeased frown; "he picked her up adrift, and being composed of highly inflammable materials, took a hot and vehement fancy for her, which fact he did not discover until your friend, Mr. Ormiston, had carried her off."

Sir Norman scowled.

"And so he has set you in search of her, has he?"

"Exactly so; and now you perceive the reason why it is quite important that I find Mr. Ormiston. We do not know where he has taken her to, but fancy it must be somewhere near the river."

"You do? I tell you what it is, my boy," exclaimed Sir Norman, suddenly and in an elevated key, "the best thing you can do is to go home and go to bed, and never mind young ladies. You'll catch the plague before you'll catch this particular young lady—I can tell you that!"

"Monsieur is excited," lisped the lad, raising his hat and running his taper fingers through his glossy, dark curls. "Is she as handsome as they say she is, I wonder?"

"Handsome!" cried Sir Norman, lighting up with quite a new sensation at the recollection. "I tell you handsome doesn't begin to describe her! She is beautiful, lovely, angelic, divine—"

Here Sir Norman's litany of adjective beginning to give out, he came to a sudden halt, with a face as radiant as the sky at sunrise.

"Ah! I did not believe them, when they told me she was so much like me; but if she is as near perfection as you describe, I shall begin to credit it. Strange, is it not, that nature should make a duplicate of her greatest earthly chef d'œuvre?"

"You conceived young jackanapes!" growled Sir Norman, in deep displeasure. "It is far stranger how such a bundle of vanity can contrive to live in this work-a-day world. You are a foreigner, I perceive."

"Yes, Sir Norman, I am happy to say I am."

"You don't like England, then?"

"I'd be sorry to like it; a dirty, beggarly, sickly place as I ever saw!"

Sir Norman eyed the slender specimen of foreign manhood, uttering this sentiment in the sincerest of tones, and let his hand fall heavily on his shoulder.

"My good youth, be careful! I happen to be a native, and not altogether used to this sort of talk. How long have you been here? Not long, I know myself—at least, not in the Earl of Rochester's service, or I would have seen you."

"Right! I have not been here a month; but that month has seemed longer than a year elsewhere. Do you know, I imagine when the world was created, this island of yours must have been made late on Saturday night, and then merely thrown in from the refuse to fill up a dent in the ocean."

Sir Norman paused in his walk, and contemplated the speaker a moment in severest silence. But Master Hubert only lifted up his saucy face and laughing black eyes, in dauntless sang froid.

"Master Hubert," began Master Hubert's companion, in his deepest and sternest bass, "I don't know your other name, and it would be of no consequence if I did—just listen to me a moment. If you don't want to get run through (you perceive I carry a sword), and have an

untimely end put to your career, just keep a civil tongue in your head, and don't slander England. Now come on."

Hubert laughed and shrugged his shoulders. "Thought is free, however; so I can have my own opinion *malgré cela*. Will you tell me, monsieur, where I can find the lady?"

"You will have it, will you?" exclaimed Sir Norman, half drawing his sword. "Don't ask questions, but answer them. Are you French?"

"Monsieur has guessed it."

"How long have you been with your present master?"

"Monsieur, I object to that term," said Hubert, with calm dignity. "Master is a vulgarism that I dislike; so, in alluding to his lordship, take the trouble to say patron."

Sir Norman laughed.

"With all my heart! How long, then, have you been with your present patron?"

"Not quite two weeks."

"It do not like to be impertinently inquisitive in addressing so dignified a gentleman, but perhaps you would not consider it too great a liberty if I inquired how you became his page?"

"Monsieur shall ask as many questions as he pleases, and it shall not be considered the slightest liberty," said the young gentleman, politely.

"I had been roaming at large about the city and his majesty's palace—whom may the good God preserve and grant a little more wisdom!—in search of a situation; and among that of all the nobles of the court, the Earl of Rochester's livery struck me as being the most becoming, and so I concluded to patronize him."

"What an honor for his lordship! Since you dislike England so much, however, you will probably soon throw up the situation and patronize the first foreign ambassador."

"Perhaps! I rather like Whitehall, however. Old Rowley has taken rather a fancy to me," said the boy, speaking with the same easy familiarity of his majesty as he would of a lap-dog.

"And what is better, so has Mistress Stewart—so much so, that God forefend the king should become jealous. This, however, is strictly *entre nous*, and not to be spoken of on any terms."

"Your secret shall be preserved at the risk of my life," said Sir Norman, laying his hand on the left side of his doublet; "and in return, may I ask if you have any relatives living—any sisters, for instance?"

"I see! you have a suspicion that the lady in white may be a sister of mine. Well, you may set your mind at rest on that point—for if she is, it is news to me, as I never saw her in my life before to-night. Is she a particular friend of yours, Sir Norman?"

"Never your mind that, my dear boy; but take my advice, and don't trouble yourself looking for her; for, most assuredly, if you find her, I shall break your head!"

"Much obliged!" said Hubert, touching his cap, "but nevertheless, I shall risk it. She had the plague, though, when she jumped into the river, and perhaps the best place to find her would be the pest-house. I shall try."

"Go, and God speed you! Yonder is the way to it, and my road lies here. Good-night, master Hubert."

"Good-night, Sir Norman," responded the page, bowing airily; "and if I do not find the lady to-night, most assuredly I shall do so to-morrow."

Turning along a road leading to the pest-house, and laughing as he went, the boy disappeared. Fearing lest the page should follow him, and thereby discover a clue to Leoline's abode, Sir Norman turned into a street some distance from the house, and waited in the shadow until he was out of sight. Then he came forth, and full of impatience to get back to the ruin, hurried on to where he had left his horse. He was still in the care of the watchman, whom he repaid for his trouble; and as he sprang on his back, he glanced up at the windows of Leoline's house. It was all buried in profound darkness, but that one window from which that faint light streamed, and he knew that she had not yet gone to rest. For a moment he lingered and looked at it in the absurd way lovers will look, and was presently rewarded by seeing what he watched for—a shadow flit between him and the light. The sight was a strong temptation to him to dismount and enter, and under pretense of warning her against the Earl of Rochester and his "pretty page," see her once again. But reflection, stepping rebukingly up to him, whispered indignantly that his lady-love was probably by this time *à son dévot*, and not at home to lovers; and Sir Norman respectfully bowed to reflection's superior wisdom. He thought of Hubert's words, "If I do not find her to-night, I shall most assuredly to-morrow," and a chill presentiment of coming evil fell upon him.

"To-morrow," he said, as he turned to go. "Who knows what to-morrow may bring forth? Fairest and dearest Leoline, good-night!"

He rode away in the moonlight, with the stars shining peacefully down upon him. His heart at the moment was a divided one—one half being given to Leoline, and the other to the Midnight Queen and her mysterious court. The further he went away from Leoline, the dimmer he became in the horizon of his thoughts; and the nearer he came to Miranda, the brighter and more eagerly she loomed up, until he spurred his horse to a most furious gallop, lest he should find the castle and the queen lost in the regions of space when he got there. Once the plague-stricken city lay behind him, his journey was short; and soon, to his great delight, the rattle of the dead-cart and the ominous call, "Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!" were left behind, and he turned into the silent, deserted by path leading to the ruin. Tying his horse to a stake in the crumbling wall, he paused for a moment to look at it in the pale, wan light of the midnight moon. He had looked at it many a time before, but never with the same interest as now; and the ruined battlements, the fallen roof, the broken windows, and moldering sides, had all a new and weird interest for him. No one was visible far or near; and feeling that his horse was secure in the shadow of the wall, he entered, and walked lightly and rapidly along in the direction of the spiral staircase. With more haste, but the same precaution, he descended, and passed through the vaults to where he knew the loose flag-stone was. It was well he did know; for there was neither strain of music nor ray of light to guide him now; and his heart sunk down to zero as he thought he might raise the stone and discover nothing. His hand positively trembled with eagerness as he lifted it; and with unbounded delight, not to be described, looked down on the same tiled assembly he had watched before. But there had been a change since—half the lights were extinguished, and the great vaulted room was comparatively in shadow—the music had entirely died away, and all was solemnly silent. But what puzzled Sir Norman most of all was the fact that there seemed to be a trial of some sort going on.

A long table, covered with green velvet, stood not unlike a modern billiard-table, looking at the right of the queen's crimson throne; and behind it, perched in a high chair, and wearing a long, solemn black robe, sat a small, thick personage, whose skin Sir Norman would

have known on a bush. He glanced at the lower throne and found it as he expected, empty; and he saw at once that his little highness was not only prince consort, but also supreme judge in the kingdom. Two or three similar black-robed gentry, among whom was recognizable the noble duke who so narrowly escaped with his life under the sword of Sir Norman and Count L'Estrange. Before this solemn conclave stood a man who was evidently the prisoner under trial, and who wore the whitest and most frightened face Sir Norman thought he had ever beheld. The queen was lounging negligently back in her throne, paying very little attention to the solemn rites, occasionally gossiping with some of the snow-white sylphs beside her, and often yawning behind her pretty finger-tips, and evidently very much bored by it all.

The rest of the company were decorously seated in the crimson and gilded arm-chairs; some listening with interest to what was going on, others holding whispered *tele-a-teles*, and all very still and respectful. Sir Norman's interest was aroused to the highest pitch; he imprudently leaned forward too far, in order to hear and see, and lost his balance. He felt he was noble, and tried to stop himself, but in vain; and ending there was no help for it, he made a sudden spring, and landed right in the midst of the assembly.

CHAPTER XI.  
THE EXECUTION.

In an instant all was confusion. Everybody sprang to their feet—ladies shrieked in chorus, gentlemen swore and drew their swords, and looked to see if they might not expect a whole army to drop from the sky upon them, as they stood. No other battalion, however, followed this forlorn hope; and, seeing it, the gentlemen took heart of grace and closed around the unceremonious intruder. The queen had sprung from her royal seat, and stood with her bright lips parted, and her brighter eyes dilating in speechless wonder. The bench, with the judge at their head, had followed her example, and stood staring with all their might, looking, truth to tell, as much startled by the sudden apparition as the fair sex. The said fair sex were still firing off little volleys of screams in chorus, and clinging desperately to their cavaliers; and everything, in a word, was in most admired disorder. Tam O'Shanter's cry of "Weel down, cutty sark!" could not have produced half such a commotion among his "hellish legion" as the emphatic *debut* of Sir Norman Kingsley among these human revelers.

The only one who seemed rather to enjoy it than otherwise was the prisoner, who was quietly and quickly making off, when the malevolent and irrepressible dwarf espied him, and the one shock acting as a counter-irritant to the other, he bounced fleetly over the table, and grabbed him in his crab-like claws.

This brisk and laudable instance of self-command had a wonderful and inspiring effect on the rest; and as he replaced the pale and pallid prisoner in his former position, giving him a vindictive shake and vicious kick with his royal boots as he did so, everybody began to feel themselves again. The ladies stopped screaming, the gentlemen ceased swearing, and more than one exclamation of astonishment followed the cries of terror.

"Sir Norman Kingsley! Sir Norman Kingsley!" rang from lip to lip of those who recognized him; and all drew closer, and looked at him as if they really could not make up their mind to believe their eyes. As for Sir Norman himself, that gentleman was destined literally, if not metaphorically, to fall on his legs that night, and had alighted on the crimson velvet carpet, cat-like, on his feet. In reference to his feelings—his first was one of frantic disapproval of going down; his second one of intense astonishment at finding himself there with unbroken bones; his third, a disagreeable conviction that he had about put his foot in it; and was in an excessively bad fix; and last, but not least, a firm and rooted determination to make the best of a bad bargain, and never say die. His first act was to take off his plumed hat, and make a profound obeisance to her majesty the queen, who was altogether too much surprised to make the return politeness demanded, and merely stared at him with her great, beautiful, brilliant eyes, as if she would never have done.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" said Sir Norman, turning gracefully to the company; "I beg ten thousand pardons for this unwarrantable intrusion, and promise you, upon my honor, never to do it again. I beg to assure you that my coming here was altogether involuntary on my part, and forced by circumstances over which I had no control; and I entreat you will not mind me in the least, but go on with the proceedings just as you did before. Should you feel my presence here any restraint, I am quite ready and willing to take my departure at any moment; and, as I before intimated, will promise on the honor of a gentleman and a knight, never again to take the liberty of tumbling through the ceiling down on your heads."

This reference to the ceiling seemed to explain the whole mystery; and everybody looked up at the corner whence he came from, and saw the flag that had been removed. As to his speech, everybody had listened to it with the greatest of attention; and sundry of the ladies, convinced by this time that he was flesh and blood, and no ghost, favored the handsome young knight with divers glances, not at all displeased or unadmiring. The queen sunk back into her seat, keeping him still transfixed with her darkly-splendid eyes; and whether she admired or otherwise, no one could tell from her still, calm face. The prince-consort's feelings—for such there could be no doubt he was—were involved in no such mystery; and he broke out into a hyena-like scream of laughter, as he recognized, upon a second look, his young friend of the "Golden Crown."

"So you have come, have you?" he cried, thrusting his unlovely visage over the table, till it almost touched Sir Norman's. "You have come, have you, after all I said?"

"Yes, sir, I have come!" said Sir Norman, with a polite bow.

"Perhaps you don't know me, my dear young sir—your little friend, you know, of the 'Golden Crown'."

"Oh, I perfectly recognize you! My little friend," said Sir Norman, with bland suavity, and unconsciously quoting Leoline, "once seen is not easy to be forgotten."

Upon this, his highness set up such another screech of mirth that it quite woke an echo through the room; and all Sir Norman's friends looked grave; for when his highness laughed, it was a very bad sign.

"My little friend will hurt himself," remarked Sir Norman, with an air of solicitude, "if he indulges in his exuberant and gleeful spirits to such an extent. Let me recommend you, as a well-wisher, to sit down and compose yourself."

Instead of complying, however, the prince, who seemed blessed with a lively sense of the ludicrous, was so struck with the extreme funniness of the young man's speech, that he relaxed into another paroxysm of levity, shriller

and more unearthly, if possible, than any preceding one, and which left him so exhausted, that he was forced to sink into his chair and into silence through sheer fatigue. Seizing this, the first opportunity, Miranda, with a glance of displeased dignity at Caliban, immediately struck in:

"Who are you, sir, and by what right do you dare to come here?"

Her tone was neither very sweet nor suave; but it was much pleasanter to be cross-examined by the owner of such a pretty face than by the ugly little monster, for the moment gasping and extinguished; and Sir Norman turned to her with alacrity and a bow.

"Madam, I am Sir Norman Kingsley, very much at your service; and I beg to assure you I did not come here, but fell here, through that hole, if you perceive, and very much against my will."

"Equivocations will not serve you in this case, sir," said the queen, with an austere dignity. "And, allow me to observe, it is just probable you would not have fallen through that hole in our royal ceiling if you had kept away from it. You raised that flag yourself, did you not?"

"Madam, I fear I must say yes!"

"And why did you do so?" demanded her majesty, with far more sharp asperity than Sir Norman dreamed could ever come from such beautiful lips.

"The rumor of Queen Miranda's charms has gone forth; and I fear I must own that rumor drew me hither," responded Sir Norman, inventing a polite little work of fiction for the occasion; "and, let me add, that I came to find that rumor had underrated instead of exaggerating her majesty's said charms."

Here Sir Norman, whose spine seemed in danger of becoming the shape of a rainbow, in excess of good breeding, made another genuflection before the queen, with his hand over the region of his heart. Miranda tried to look grave, and wear that expression of severe solemnity I am told queens and rich people always do; but, in spite of herself, a little pleased smile rippled over her face; and, noticing it, and the bow and speech, the prince suddenly and sharply set up such another screech of laughter as no steamboat or locomotive, in the present age of steam, could begin to equal in ghastliness.

"Will your highness have the goodness to hold your tongue?" inquired the queen, with much the air and look of Mrs. Caudle, "and allow me to ask this stranger a few questions uninterrupted? Sir Norman Kingsley, how long have you been above there, listening and looking on?"

"Madam, I was not there five minutes when I suddenly, and to my great surprise, found myself here."

"A lie!—a lie!" exclaimed the dwarf, furiously. "It is over two hours since I met you at the bar of the 'Golden Crown.'"

"My dear little friend," said Sir Norman, drawing his sword, and flourishing it within an inch of the royal nose, "just make that remark again, and my sword will cleave your pretty head, as the cimeter of Saladin clove the cushion of down! I earnestly assure you, madam, that I had but just knelt down to look, when I discovered, to my dismay, that I was no longer there, but in your charming presence."

"In that case, my lords and gentlemen," said the queen, glancing blandly round the apartment, "he has witnessed nothing, and, therefore, merits but slight punishment."

"Permit me, your majesty," said the duke, who had read the roll *à mort*, and who had been eying Sir Norman sharply for some time, "permit me one moment! This is the very individual who slew the Earl of Ashley, while his companion was doing for my Lord Craven. Sir Norman Kingsley," said his grace, turning with awful impressiveness to that young person, "do you know me?"

"Quite as well as I wish to," answered Sir Norman, with a cool and rather contemptuous glance in his direction. "You look extremely like a certain highwayman, with a most villainous countenance, I encountered a few hours back, and whom I would have made mince-meat of if he had not been coward enough to fly. Probably you may be the same; you look fit for that, or anything else."

"Cut him down!" "Dash his brains out!" "Run him through!" "Shoot him!" were a few of the mild and pleasant insinuations that went off on every side of him, like a fierce volley of pop-guns; and a score of bright blades flashed blue and threatening on every side; while the prince broke out into another shriek of laughter, that rung high over all. Sir Norman drew his own sword, and stood on the defense, breathed one thought to Leoline, gave himself up for lost; but before quite doing so—to use a phrase not altogether as original as it might be—"determined to sell his life as dearly as possible." Angry eyes and fierce faces were on every hand, and his dreams of matrimony and Leoline seemed about to terminate then and there, when luck came to his aid, in the shape of her most gracious majesty the queen. Springing to her feet, she waved her scepter, while her black eyes flashed as fiercely as the best of them, and her voice rung out like a trumpet-tone.

"Sheathe your swords, my lords, and back every man of you! Not one hair of his head shall fall without my permission; and the first who lays hands on him until that consent is given, shall die, if I have to shoot him myself! Sir Norman Kingsley, stand near, and fear not. At their peril, let one of them touch you!"

Sir Norman bent on one knee, and raised the gracious hand to his lips. At the fierce, ringing, imperious tone, all involuntarily fell back, as if they were accustomed to obey it; and the prince, who seemed to-night in an uncommonly facetious mood, laughed again, long and shrill.

"What are your majesty's commands?" asked the discomfited duke, rather sulkily. "Is this insulting interloper to go free?"

"That is no affair of yours, my lord duke!" answered the spirited, not to say fierce voice, of the queen. "Be good enough to finish Lord Gloucester's trial; and until then I will be responsible for the safe-keeping of Sir Norman Kingsley."

"And after that, he is to go free—eh, your majesty?" said the dwarf, laughing to that extent that he ran the risk of rupturing an artery.

"After that, it shall be precisely as I please!" replied the ringing voice; while the black eyes flashed anything but loving glances upon him. "While I am queen here, I shall be obeyed; when I am queen no longer, you may do as you please! My lords, (turning her passionate, beautiful face to the hushed audience), "am I or am I not sovereign here?"

"Madam, you alone are our sovereign lady and queen!"

"Then, when I condescend to command, you shall obey! Do you, your highness, and you, lord duke, go on with the Earl of Gloucester's trial, and I will be the stranger's jailer."

"She is right," said the dwarf, his fierce little eyes gleaming with a malignant light; "let us do one thing before another; and after we have settled Gloucester, here, we will attend to



this man's case. Guards, keep a sharp eye on your new prisoner. Ladies and gentlemen, be good enough to resume your seats. Now, your grace, continue the trial."

"Where did we leave off?" inquired his grace, looking rather at a loss, and scowling vengeance dire at the handsome queen and her handsome protegee, as he sunk back in his chair of state.

"The earl was confessing his guilt, or about to do so. Pray, my lord," said the dwarf, glaring upon the pallid prisoner, "were you not saying you had betrayed us to the king?"

A breathless silence followed the question—everybody seemed to hold their very breath to listen. Even the queen leaned forward and awaited the answer eagerly, and the many eyes that had been riveted on Sir Norman since his *entree* left him now for the first time and settled on the prisoner. A piteous spectacle that prisoner was—his face whiter than the snowy nymphs behind the throne, and so distorted with fear, fury and guilt, that it looked scarcely human. Twice he opened his eyes to reply, and twice all sounds died away in a choking gasp.

"Do you hear his highness?" sharply inquired the lord high chancellor, reaching over the great seal, and giving the unhappy Earl of Gloucester a rap on the head with it. "Why do you not answer?"

"Pardon! pardon!" exclaimed the earl, in a husky whisper. "Do not believe the tales they tell you of me. For God's sake, spare my life!"

"Confess!" thundered the dwarf, striking the table with his clenched fist, until all the papers thereon jumped spasmodically into the air—"confess at once, or I shall run you through where you stand!"

The earl, with a perfect screech of terror, flung himself flat upon his face and hands before the queen, with such force, that Sir Norman expected to see his countenance make a hole in the floor.

"Oh, madam! spare me! spare me! spare me! Have mercy on me as you hope for mercy yourself!"

She recoiled, and drew back her very garments from his touch, as if that touch was pollution, eying him the while with a glance frigid and pitiless as death.

"There is no mercy for traitors!" she coldly said. "Confess your guilt, and expect no pardon from me!"

"Lift him up!" shouted the dwarf, clapping the air with his hands, as if he could have clawed the heart out of his victim's body; "back with him to his place, guards, and see that he does not leave it again!"

Squirming, and writhing, and twisting himself in their grasp, in a very uncomfortable and acrid-like fashion, the earl was dragged back to his place, and forcibly held there by two of the guards, while his face grew so ghastly and convulsed that Sir Norman turned away his head, and could not bear to look at it.

"Confess!" once more yelled the dwarf, in a terrible voice, while his still more terrible eyes literally flashed sparks of fire—"confess, or by all that's sacred it shall be tortured out of you. Guards, bring me the thumb-screws, and let us see if they will not exercise the dumb devil by which our ghastly friend is possessed!"

"No, no, no!" shrieked the earl, while the foam flew from his lips. "I confess! I confess! I confess!"

"Good! And what do you confess?" said the duke, blandly, leaning forward, while the dwarf fell back with a yell of laughter at the success of his ruse.

"I confess all—everything—anything! only spare my life!"

"Do you confess to having told Charles, King of England, the secrets of our kingdom and this place?" said the duke, sternly, rapping down the petition with a roll of parchment.

The earl grew, if possible, more ghastly white.

"I do—I must! but oh! for the love of—"

"Never mind love," cut in the inexorable duke, "it is a subject that has nothing whatever to do with the present case. Did you or did you not receive for the aforesaid information a large sum of money?"

"I did; but, my lord, my lord, spare—"

"Which sum of money you have concealed," continued the duke, with another frown and a sharp rap. "Now the question is, where have you concealed it?"

"I will tell you with all my heart, only spare my life!"

"Tell us first, and we will think about your life afterward. Let me advise you as a friend, my lord, to tell at once, and truthfully," said the duke, toying negligently with the thumb-screws.

"It is buried at the north corner of the old wall at the head of Bradshaw's grave. You shall have that and a thousandfold more if you'll only pardon—"

"Enough!" broke in the dwarf, with the look and tone of an exultant demon. "That is all we want. My lord duke, give me the death-warrant, and while her majesty signs it, I will pronounce his doom!"

The duke handed him a roll of parchment, which he glanced critically over, and handed to the queen for her autograph. That royal lady spread the vellum on her knee, took the pen and affixed her signature as readily as if she were inditing a sonnet in an album. Then his highness, with a face that fairly scintillated with demoniac delight, stood up and fixed his eyes on the ghastly prisoner, and spoke in a voice that reverberated like the tolling of a death-bell through the room:

"My Lord of Gloucester, you've been tried by a council of your fellow-peers, presided over by her royal self, and found guilty of high treason. Your sentence is that you be taken hence, immediately, to the block, and there be beheaded, in punishment of your crime."

His highness wound up this somewhat solemn speech, rather inconsistently, by bursting out into one of his shrillest peals of laughter; and the miserable Earl of Gloucester, with a gasp, in, unearthly yell, fell back in the arms of the attendants. Dead and oppressive silence reigned; and Sir Norman, who half believed all along the while that this was a farce, began to feel an uncomfortable sense of chill creeping over him, and to think that, though practical jokes were excellent things in their way, there was yet a possibility of carrying them a little too far. The disagreeable silence was first broken by the dwarf, who, after gloating for a moment over his victim's convulsive spasms, sprung nimbly from his chair of dignity and held out his arm for the queen. The queen arose, which seemed to be a signal for everybody else to do the same, and all began forming themselves in a sort of line of march.

"What is to be done with this other prisoner, your highness?" inquired the duke, making a poke with his forefinger at Sir Norman. "Is he to stay here, or is he to accompany us?"

His highness turned round, and putting his face close up to Sir Norman's, favored him with a malignant grin.

"You'd like to come, wouldn't you, my dear young friend?"

"Really," said Sir Norman, drawing back and returning the dwarf's stare with compound interest, "that depends altogether on the nature of the entertainment; but, at the same time, I'm much obliged to you for consulting my inclinations."

This reply nearly upset his highness' gravity once more, but he checked his mirth after the first irrepressible squeal; and finding the company were all arranged in the order of going, and awaiting his sovereign pleasure, he turned.

"Let him come," he said, with his countenance still distorted by inward merriment; "it will do him good to see how we punish offenders here, and teach him what he is to expect himself. Is your majesty ready?"

"My majesty has been ready and waiting for the last five minutes," replied the lady, over- looking his proffered hand with grand, silent disdain, and stepping lightly down from her throne.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 327.)

## BREAK NOT THE SPELL.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Break not the spell that holds me now;  
A fever burns upon my brow,  
And oh, a breath of sweet perfume  
Comes floating softly in my room.

As if a thousand censurers swung;  
I hear notes lisped by angel tongue;  
And all the stars that long have shone,  
Seem but to shine on me alone.

The brightest ones have formed a crown;  
Sweet angels seem to bear it down;  
The crown is laid upon my brow:  
Break not the spell that holds me now.

I feel myself arising up,  
To me is held the blissful cup  
Of everlasting life above,  
By angels gentle as a dove.

Farewell, with earth I now am done,  
My life's hour-glass has ceased to run.  
Be calm and dry the tears I see  
And I will weep mine all for thee.

Break not the spell that holds me now,  
A crown is laid upon my brow;  
The cross I bore through life's laid down  
And in its place I wear the crown!

## The Cross of Carlyon:

OR,

THE LADY OF LOCHWOOD.

A Romance of Baltimore.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

"JEROME! JEROME!"

LIKE a devil possessed, Wilford Wynne turned upon the girl who had broken in upon and checked his headlong passion.

For an instant he forgot Christabel, and glared upon this intruder, incredulous, confounded and furious.

But, for an instant only. A lump arose in his throat; his veins swelled with molten rage, and his appearance was that of a demon loosed with all the fearful deadlines of soul accursed.

"Rosalie! You here?" he gurgled. "And you dare? You follow me thus? By the fates! you shall haunt me no more!"

At one wild leap he had her in his vengeful grasp.

"Help!" shrieked the girl.

His action was so sudden, arrow-like, that there was no eluding the talon hands which closed upon her in the grip of a vise. There was but an interpretation of that terrific clutch: murder.

Christabel's lips parted in a cry that woke every echoing corner of the house. She ran to the windows, but they were fastened.

"Help! Help!" shrieked Rosalie again. "Don't kill me, Will; life is sweet, after all. I couldn't help it, Will; it maddened me to see you acting so with her. Don't—Oh, help! he is choking me!"

In vain she struggled, the two swaying hither and thither. His fingers closed about the fair, tender throat, and his demoniac eyes, starting from their sockets, glared frightfully into those of his intended victim.

Christabel threw herself upon the two, and with her feeble grasp essayed in vain to loosen that grip of death.

But, though they heard it not, there was a rumble of wheels outside, and presently a sound of footsteps on the stairs.

Ah! if there was help for Rosalie, it must come soon. And it did.

A form bounded from the gloomy entry, and Wilford Wynne reeled and spun like a wasted teetotum, striking heavily as he fell.

"Sail in, Mr. Vance!" shouted the voice of Jack Stoner, as he caught the insensible form of the girl.

One glad cry came from Christabel, as she tottered toward her deliverer.

"Jerome! Jerome! Heaven be thanked."

"Darling! I was just in time."

He paused to fold her to him—then knelt beside the gambler to slip the handcuffs on his wrists.

It had not occupied Felix longer than the twenty minutes agreed upon, to finish the job and return to the corner of Canton avenue and Broadway, where he had promised to await the detective.

He found the two standing in surprise at his absence.

"Here I am, gents," he saluted, coming toward them at a rattling pace.

"Where did you go?" interrogated Stoner.

"Well, Mr. Vance," addressing the detective, "a bit of a job kept along, and as it wasn't far I thought maybe I'd be back in time. I see'd you on Shakespeare street."

"Were your customers on Shakespeare street?" eying the man keenly.

"Well—I—a—yes, they was." Felix began to be wary. He did not wish to "give away" the gambler, and he was afraid of the detective.

"Perhaps they consisted of one or more men and a woman?" continued Jerome, sharply.

Felix slouched his hat, and began fumbling with the door-handle.

"My man," said the detective, "I can see right through you—"

"Well, I am kinder thin—they say I won't wash," broke in Felix, avoiding those brilliant, searching eyes.

"During our absence," pursued Jerome, "you have carried the very parties we are after. Your customer was Wilford Wynne, the gambler."

Felix shifted uneasily.

"Come," spoke Jack Stoner, "you'd better give it up."

"We are after a young lady who has been abducted," Jerome gently but firmly laid hold of the fellow's shoulder and forced him round till his face came directly under the rays of the street-lamp. "While we were off, these parties found you; you drove them to a new hiding-place—for, no doubt, they were well ad-

vised of our pursuit. Now, I propose to call upon the first officer I see and have you detained as a witness—"

"No. Let up," interrupted Felix, quickly. "You detectives must be the very devil, ain't you? Now, Mr. Vance—"

"Shall I call that policeman?" Jack Stoner asked, significantly.

"My man, here's twenty dollars. There's another twenty for you at my office, to-morrow. I guess I need not say any more?"

"Well, dog-my-seats if I ain't in fur it now! Mr. Wynne'll blow the whole top of my head off—"

"Mr. Wynne will not know anything. So it's settled. Be lively."

In a few seconds our friends were speeding to the rescue.

But scarcely had the back disappeared when two figures emerged from the archway of the Market House. Arlys, senior and junior.

"Eh! Beats the Jews, don't it? I say; they pumped him easy enough, didn't they?"

"Follow me," said Albert Arly, gruffly.

"Eh? Where to?"

"After that hack—"

"Not any. What! walk right into ye fingers of ye law? Ho! not I. Um! my direction lies as far as possible the other way. The LEIPSIG leaves Locust Point to-morrow at two P. M. Take my advice and be on her. You'll find me there. The firm of Arly & Arly is herewith dissolved. Everybody for himself. I'm off. Look out."

Albert Arly did not wait to hear this sputtering rignarole. He stalked away rapidly, retracing the course toward Johnny Snap's rum-shop.

Preston Arly—frisky little rascal!—pulled his skull-cap tighter over his eyes, and hopped on to a Broadway car that was passing.

"What are we to do with this fellow?" questioned Jack Stoner, standing over the prostrate and insensible form of the gambler.

Jerome and Christabel were giving their attention to Rosalie.

Poor girl! Wynne's merciless fingers had left their purple mark. It was almost a murder.

"Get some water, Stoner."

"Water it is," Jack twirled around in search of the article, but found none. Grasping up the pitcher, he hastened down to the filthy bar on the first floor.

"What's wrong up-stairs?" lazily inquired the ugly proprietor, as he filled the pitcher at the hydrant behind the bar.

"Guess you'll find out in the morning," was the ambiguous answer.

"Anybody hurt?"

"Better come up and see."

"Nother feller came in with you, didn't there?"

"Might have been. Say, hurry up that water-spigot of yours."

Hardly had Jack Stoner departed with the pitcher of water when a side door opened and Albert Arly entered.

"Quick, ugly!" he hissed, "work the dumb-waiter."

"What's the row, anyhow?"

"My friend's in trouble up-stairs."

"Do you know who them fellers is 'at went up a bit ago?"

"Detectives. Our jig's played—"

"But, if I work the dummy, he may 'spicion 'at you've been here afore. You said you didn't want him to know that."

"Lucky for him I have been here before. Quick—work the dummy!"

The two stepped into a cupboard, closing the door.

Wilford Wynne had returned to consciousness when Stoner returned. He stood sullenly surveying the group. A shining revolver in the hand of the detective had prevented any attempt to escape from the room.

Jerome now slipped the weapon back in his pocket, saying, while Christabel bathed the face of the unconscious girl:

"Look the door and draw the key, or he may get away."

"Locked it is." And to Wynne, as he obeyed the warning: "How's your head feel, 'pretty'?"

But Jack Stoner vented a sudden cry of surprise:

"Oh! Look there!"

At one side was a narrow door to what might have been mistaken for a closet. This door swung open, and simultaneously—acting upon the command of a voice unheard by the others—Wilford Wynne sprang inside, pulling the door shut after him.

Jack was right at his heels, but too late. The gambler had vanished as if by magic. And the bottom of the closet was gone, leaving a black, treacherous hole from which issued a faint, scraping, sliding noise.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BLOW THAT KILLED.

FOR the second time in forty years, Lochwood was undergoing a routine of repairs.

Men and women were at work, dusting, scrubbing and overhauling the interior; generally, till the patriarchal mansion seemed dressed and lined anew; others were clearing away the rubbish of vines, leaves and boughs that had grown and scattered in tangles of decay throughout the last fifteen years.

Through the mass of confusion still peeped some gaudy reminiscences of the past—a gorgeous robe, or bunch of vine blooming on the high buried arbors.

The scene was changing fast in that golden autumn, seeming to spring from sere and shadow to the vigor of the fragrant season.

Wagons rumbled and creaked, hammer and saw were busy; painters and gardeners moved hither and thither like bees; fences were being re-built, carriages re-rolled; in short, at one sweep, as it were, the curtain of neglect was torn aside, disclosing a picture of beauty that had existed, though forgotten, solely for the use in store.

And what did it all portend? The question was soon answered.

One bright morning, when the sun—half high, beamed and melted on a scene of dew and fragrance, and the songs of birds awakened every joyous echo in the yellowing woodlands—a number of carriages began arriving.

Servants in apron and livery danced about like hop-o-my-thumbs; bustle and buzz pervaded the voiceful air.

Last of all was an equipage of coal-black steeds and glittering harness; inside, three occupants: Jerome Harrison, Christabel and Rosalie!

A grand wedding was *en tapis*.

Before the sun had reached its zenith, Jerome and Christabel were united in a bond that promised sweetly for the future of both.

When the minister had performed the holy rite—and ere the congratulations of friends could reach them—Jerome folded his bride to his heart in one quick, blissful outburst.

"Christabel! my own! may God give us to know how very, very happy we should be!"

It was then and there that Jerome's associates in the detective service learned his real

name. Of course they knew nothing of the eventful history which had linked the newly married couple so strongly together through so many years; they only saw him wed a woman of wondrous beauty and wealth, who, to all appearances, idolized him, and naturally, in their clever way, called him a "lucky dog."

From noon of day till noon of night the reception lasted. When the gay company departed, three joyous hearts were left to sweet commune.

Rosalie was to remain with those who loved her. Her home, at last, was in the hearts of those who had the best right to offer her protection.

Jerome had told Rosalie more of herself than she had ever known. By words he has dropped, the reader may guess that even the child of Meggy Merle was not forgotten, amid the jottings of the diary which Jerome came into possession of at the death of the Lady of Lochwood.

"You were stolen by a drunken father," he explained, gently, "when Meggy Merle, your mother, came to Lochwood. My Christabel was then about nine years old—you were an infant. My inference, based upon some little knowledge of the case, is, that you were placed in the care of the mother of Wilford Wynne. When she died, Wynne was nearing manhood, and he saw, in the child that was left on his hands, the promise of a beautiful woman. His company, even at that age, was bad; he formed plans concerning you. But, why should I detail—you know too well his heartless villainy—"

"But I was his lawful wife," spoke the girl, earnestly. "I have shown you the certificate I snatched from the pavement, on the night they were taking Christabel from the house on Shakespeare street."

"Yes," said Christabel, sliding an arm affectionately around the other's waist, "I found it in the drawer of a table in his room. It was quite by accident. I intended keeping it until I could find you, for Meggy had told me about her lost child. You must forget all troubles, now, Rosalie, and only look ahead."

"Forget, also, Wilford Wynne," added Jerome.

A momentary shade of sadness crossed her face. She turned her starry eyes upon her friends, seemingly unable to speak, because of some deep emotion.

"I once loved him so much! But I will forget him, and never think of him again. Good-night."

"Good-night, Rosalie."

She clasped their hands warmly in her own, and then withdrew.

Jerome was thoughtful. When alone with his wife, his treasure—after all excitement was past, and a calm sense of affairs crept over him—he remembered a task yet undone, a mission unfulfilled.

"Christabel, I must leave you to-morrow."

She looked in surprise, feeling a keen pang at the announcement.

"So soon, Jerome? Where must you go?"

"My lot is cast in the detective service, darling—a wild, hazardous life which I adopted years ago, when my heart was desolate and nothing but danger and adventure served to take my mind from brooding. My time—what I can not give to you—belongs to my patrons and the law."

"And will it be always so?"

"No. I will gradually abandon it. I have something bright to take care of now; you shall soon have all my time, and may Heaven grant that it will be long. There is a case in hand which I started, myself, many years ago. For fifteen years I have worked up the evidence to bring to justice a man who committed the foulest of crimes, and betrayed and deceived, like the wretch he was, an innocent woman who worshipped him: an enemy to your mother and to you."

"There is but one such person I can think of."

"Yes—the 'Hawk'."

"Jerome, tell me who this 'Hawk' is. Let me know more than I do of him."

"Do not ask me, darling; it is not for you to know."

Thus did it appear that Christabel was never to interpret the meaning of a name that was a terror to her in childhood and an unsolvable enigma in later years. She questioned no further.

The grand old mansion was dark and still. The household was slumbering.

All had retired except Jerome. He was feeling strangely, he knew not why. His mind, too, was suddenly absorbed with thoughts of the duty that had been too long deferred: the arrest of Albert Arly for a crime to be shown anon.

The sign of "Arly & Arly" had disappeared from the doorway on St. Paul street—the father and son had disappeared also. And Wilford Wynne, though hunted by some of the shrewdest detectives in the service—at Jerome's private instigation—could not be found. That Preston Arly had left the country, was known, but Albert, he had reason to believe, was lurking somewhere near. It was well to be on the alert. Familiar with the nature of the latter, he felt that, wherever he was secreted, his purpose was an evil one, and he would, at the first opportunity, sting like a serpent in the grass.

Jerome walked to and fro in the library, restless of limb and brain. It was near two o'clock, when he drew forth, from a secret recess in the bookcase, the dark leather diary that had belonged to the Lady of Lochwood.

"What has come over me?" he muttered.

"Let me look at this. Perhaps these pages may divert me. I have not read them since my first Christmas died."

Seating himself at the desk—the same desk where had been signed the papers which gave him the management of this and other estates—he fumbled the leaves of the diary in an absent way.

The moments passed. His head drooped lower and lower, his breathing grew heavy, and repose—a sleep disturbed and nervous—closed his eyes.

He slept and dreamed. There rose a vision first of darkness deep and strange, slowly changing to a glimmer, then a light like a burst of glory. Voices, murmuring were around him, chants from celestial choirs, and arcs and portals to a realm of golden Paradise. Presently a face—a sad, mild face, with eyes that looked startled and lips that moved and spoke. He heard a call as from afar:

"Jerome! My son! Awake!"

"Mother! Mother!" he cried, and at one spring was upon his feet, quivering with a sense of danger.

None too soon. The sight he saw was thrilling. Albert Arly, crouching near, in his shirt sleeves, hair disheveled on his brow, and in one hand a murderous knife. How he came there is a matter scarcely



him alone, and these straining through her tears at the dear, cold, ghastly face.

In raising his head, the movement pushed back the sleeve of her breakfast robe, and on her arm, close beside the gory, tangled hair of the corpse, appeared the ominous device of a cross all dripping with blood—the Cross of Carlyn.

They led her away at last—led her gently, one on each side, Rosalie and one of the maids. As she went with them from the room of horrors, her head was turned rigidly, and eyes riveted upon the bloody figure.

What happened next she knew not; all was chaos to her distracted mind.

A servant came to the bedroom door and handed Rosalie the leather diary, which had lain open on the library table. She placed it, without a glance, in the bureau drawer.

Two days later there was a quiet funeral—a double funeral, for the body of Albert Arly, which had been seen and recognized by Christabel (though the discovery remained a secret with her) was buried at the same time.

The affair was very much of a mystery at the mansion, especially when the unaccountable caprice of Christabel placed the body of the supposed burglar in a grave in the same lot with her husband. Nor did the local sheets fail to detail the sensation to their readers.

The days went by. Christabel and Rosalie, both in deep mourning, with mutually sympathetic hearts, lived secluded at Lochwood. They were devoted to each other, thinking and grieving together amid the everlasting shadow.

Christabel now was cold as the ice of winter. The one sole spark of earnest passion that had existed in her bosom, to be fired to a glow of love by Jerome Harrison, had gone out forever, leaving a withered heart that knew no world beyond the memory of its murdered idol.

"I must leave this place, Rosalie," she murmured, lowly, as they sat one evening before the warm, grated fireplace.

The weather had grown cool to chilliness, and the fire breathed out a pleasant heat.

Rosalie wound an arm around Christabel's waist.

"Am I going, too?"

"What a question! We must not separate."

"And where to?"

"Heaven only knows. I feel like some poor wanderer, whose aim, object and ambition to live are for—nothing."

"See, Christabel," said the girl, "here is a book which was brought to me on that terrible day. It has your name on it. I had forgotten it until this afternoon, and she placed the dark leather diary in Christabel's hands."

On the first fly-leaf was written:

"Diary of Christabel Carlyn."

As she read it, Christabel shook her head, saying:

"No, Rosalie, that was my mother's name; it was hers. Here is another line—read it."

And Rosalie read aloud:

"For the perusal of my dear wife when I am dead."

They were the last words penned, being the last act of Jerome Harrison before sinking into that sleep from which he awoke to be stricken down by the assassin.

"When he is dead, Rosalie"—Christabel repeated the words on the fly-leaf.

"Ha, like you, must have felt the approach of evil," remarked Rosalie.

"Yes. Shall we look over the diary now?"

"We? Why, it is private, and for you alone."

"No, Rosalie; my secrets are yours—yours must be mine. Let us be sisters in heart, if not in birth. Come—the diary."

They opened the worn and thumbed tablet, and began a perusal of the half-faded pages.

"See, Rosalie, mother was born at Chichester, England."

It was a detail of unusual and startling interest that greeted them.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 321.)

## WAITING.

BY SERGT. LACY.

I have roamed the world an exile,  
I have braved the frozen land;  
I have sailed the restless ocean,  
Track'd the desert's burning sand;  
But wander where on earth I may,  
Or tempt what scenes I will,  
The spirit of my girlie bride  
Like a phantom haunts me still.

In my dreams and twilight musings,  
In the silence of the sea,  
Mid the crush of crowded cities  
She is ever near to me.  
The splashing wavelets murmur of her,  
The whispering night-winds sigh the same,  
And the glittering stars of heaven  
Shape the symbols of her name.

Death I've braved in many a peril  
By field and forest, food and fell—  
I have heard the midnight howl  
Curse the sweet night with his yell,  
And the scream of the jungle tiger  
As he leaped to my rifle-crack,  
And the gaunt wolf's hungry howling  
As he prowled along my track;

I have met the sunny glances  
Of Italia's haughty child—  
Twined a Spanish maiden's tresses  
While on me alone she smiled;  
Pressed the lips and met the laughter  
Of the merry girl of France,  
While the night was music-burdened,  
And around us whirled the dance—

But death for me wears no grim visage,  
And his coming wakes no fear,  
And love's words of honeyed sweetness  
Senseless fall upon mine ear;  
For with wild unrest I'm waiting  
For my girlie bride of yore,  
And to see her white hand waving  
Welcome from the shadowy shore.

## Without a Heart:

OR,

## WALKING ON THE BRINK.

A STORY OF LIFE'S SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

AUTHOR OF "GIVEN FOR GOLD," "THE FLYING YANKEE," "THE MEXICAN SPY,"  
"TRACKED THROUGH LIFE."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE GIPSY FORTUNE-TELLER.

A FEW days after the bitter interview between Eve and Clinton Clarendon the former was seated in the orange-grove arbor one pleasant afternoon, engaged in sketching a view of the mansion, with the bay, cliffs and ocean beyond.

One would have believed that the spot, where poor Paul Lambert fell, would have called up sad thoughts to Eve, and caused her to shun the arbor; but her face was as tranquil as the sea in a calm, and her smile as bright as a ray of the setting sun.

Suddenly a shadow fell upon her, and, with a cry of alarm, Eve sprang to her feet, for a strange-looking being stood before her.

It was a woman, of perhaps sixty years of age, with long, flowing white hair, a face as dark as an Indian, and shaded beneath a broad felt sombrero.

She was dressed in a queer mixture of male and female attire, and around her neck were a number of chains, some of gold, several of silver and others of beads, while her fingers were covered with rings.

In her hand she carried a long staff, painted black, red and green, and the glitter of her black eyes was certainly not reassuring to Eve's nerves, who asked, with all the calmness she could command:

"Can I do ought to serve you, that you come here?"

"I beg from neither man nor woman, girl; I am a gipsy queen, and my feet track woman, the soil of many lands."

"The beauty of your home lured me, and I came hither to gaze upon it. Seeing you, I made bold to approach, for I am one unto whom power is given to look into the human heart and read there the hidden mysteries of the future."

The woman spoke with a manner and voice most impressive, and almost unconsciously Eve, strong as was her own magnetism, felt her influence, and replied:

"I have heard of those who read the fortunes of others, and a year ago I would have been glad to have had you tell mine—but now I feel that I have it in my own hands, to make, or mar my future life; but stay! I would know of the past, for you certainly can tell of what has already happened if you know that which is to come."

"I can tell you of the past, maiden—of the mystery that hangs over your life."

Eve shuddered, in spite of herself, and replied:

"There is a mystery hanging over my past life which I could never discover."

"I would know it; so tell it me if you can."

"Hold forth your hand, and let me see its lines," almost ordered the woman.

Eve did as directed, and, glancing alternately into the tiny palm and the beautiful face, the woman began in a low, monotonous voice:

"You were born under a lucky star, girl, although your birth was an unfortunate one for your mother."

"She, poor girl, had loved a young and dashing man, the son of a wealthy neighbor, and he had professed love for her."

"Secretly the two were married, and it remained a secret until your birth discovered it to your mother's parents."

"But they disbelieved the story, for the young couple had been married by an itinerant preacher—you see I read all this here—"

"Go on, woman, I believe you are near the truth," impatiently said Eve.

"Well, the certificate was lost, the preacher could not be found, and your mother was turned in disgrace from her parents' home."

"She was, however, cared for by her husband, and you were reared up in luxury, and given every advantage of education, until your father tired of your mother, for her charms faded rapidly, and he deserted her."

"With what money she could obtain from what had been given her by her husband in the past, your mother, I see here, went away, leaving you to the care of others."

"At length misfortune overtook those in whose care you had been left, and again your mother claimed you—"

"You are wrong there, woman; I went to live with a woman who claimed to be my aunt."

"Ha! ha! You so believed her; it was your mother, girl, and she had so changed that, girl that you were, you failed to recognize her. See, I read all that I say here; here are the lines."

"Hating you now, because you were so like the man she had once loved, and who had deserted her, she made your life a very hell—until—"

"Until what?" asked Eve, as the gipsy hesitated.

"Yes, the lines in your hand divide here—until you fled from her home."

"So far, true; now tell me of my father."

"Ah! his was a life of crime, for I see it stamped here in your palm."

"Yes, he went forth in the world as a single man, and with his powers of fascination, and his wealth, won hearts but to destroy them."

"At length he won the love of a pure young girl, who, trusting him, consented to become his wife."

"Need I say, girl, that it was a false marriage, for your mother still lived?"

"But blood came between your father and the young girl he so cruelly deceived—for he fell by the hand of one who avenged the shame thus cast upon her."

"My father is dead, then?"

"Yes; but your mother yet lives."

"I care not for her," said Eve, impatiently;

"and now, here is gold for you, for your story, false as it is, has certainly been entertaining. It is getting late and you had better hasten on, for this is not a healthy neighborhood for tramps."

So saying, and with a light laugh, Eve gathered away her drawing materials and hastened after her.

At length a bitter smile swept over the dark face, and she murmured:

"Go on, my brave beauty; but a day of reckoning comes to all such as thou art."

Without another word the woman walked rapidly away, and soon disappeared in the dense forest's gloom.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

FORTUNE HER SLAVE.

UPON returning to the mansion, Eve, for a while, felt a little disquiet in mind, for the pretended past-reading of the gipsy queen had made an unpleasant impression upon her.

Notwithstanding her good sense and her education, a vein of superstition ran through her which caused her to put faith in what the woman had told her, especially as she could not contradict her, for of her past life, or rather of her parents, she was lamentably ignorant.

Therefore, even though she endeavored to make the woman believe she had spoken falsely, she gave credit to all that had been told her.

For her mother she cared nothing; for her father she had always felt a romantic affection, a longing to know him, when old enough to appreciate the love between a parent and his daughter, and it grieved her to feel that she would never meet him, that the grave hid him forever from her view; while over her swept a feeling of revenge toward the man who had placed him there—a fierce desire to end his murderer's days in the despair and gloom attending a known and sudden death.

So far Fortune had certainly been the slave of the bold woman who lived for self alone, and admitted to herself that she was without heart.

True, she felt most kindly toward Colonel Erskine, and her manner was that of a most loving daughter; but at heart she felt for him just as she did for the wind that drove her sailboat over the waves, the horse that bounded beneath her weight, the flowers that perfumed the air; if necessary, she could give all up without a sigh.

Without heart she was, excepting in one respect—her wild, passionate love for Clarence Erskine.

She remembered him when first she had seen him—that afternoon in the woodland, when he stood face to face with the dark, stern man whom his hand had sent to the grave.

The letter she had found had told why he had sought the life of Colonel Roselle—because he believed him the betrayer of poor Florice, his sister.

Then Colonel Erskine had told her all the sad story, never once dreaming that Eve knew as much as did himself—nay, more, for she had seen the fatal duel and had read Florice's letter.

Then in her heart came pity for Clarence, for she knew that he suffered for having taken the life of a man whom he afterward found was not guilty of the crime of which he was accused.

Again, the devotion to her of the young lawyer, his legal struggle in her defense, his noble nature, splendid bearing, and handsome face, added to his courtly and winning manners, and trust in her, a wife, all drew her toward him with a love that was immeasurable, especially in one of her wildly passionate nature and strong feelings.

Though a wife, a deserted wife, a supposed youth, a suspected murderer, Fortune had proven her very slave through all, and she so intended to play her cards that it should never fail her.

That she would deceive the only man she loved, the only being in the world she really cared for, she well knew; but she argued that where "ignorance was bliss, 'twere folly to be wise," and so long as Clarence believed her his wife, it was sufficient.

Of Clinton Clarendon she felt no fear; he was a bold, bad man, she knew; but she held the end of the rope that would strangle him out of life, and she felt that his lips were sealed as close as the tomb.

Occasionally there would sweep over her a pang of remorse at the part she was playing; but she would smother the feeling, and in the excitement of her bold game to hold Fortune her slave, feel the joy that a chieftain might upon beating back his enemy and holding him constantly in hand.

As beautiful as a dream of womanhood she certainly was, and she was conscious of her power to make or mar a man's happiness for life.

And so thought Clarence Erskine, as he stood gazing in upon her, as she sat in the music-room, idly running her hands over her harp, a present from himself to her.

"Eve, I am glad you are here, for I have been seeking you."

"I am glad to know it, Clarence. Sit down beside me and I will sing you your favorite song, 'Waiting.'"

"No, Eve, I would rather talk to you now, and yet those lines in 'Waiting'—"

"Come, for my arms are empty. Come, for the day is long. And turn the darkness into glory."

are just what I would now ask of you, Eve, for my arms yearn to infold you to my heart; the day is long without you, and you alone can turn the darkness of my life into glory, for around my inmost life you have entwined yourself, as does the ivy around even a lightning-blasted tree."

The allusion to the gloom of his life brought to Eve's mind the fatal duel; his speaking of the "lightning-blasted tree" recalled that deadly scene where God's rebuke rent in twain a lofty tree, with one stroke of heaven's forked fire. These thoughts subdued Eve, and her bosom rose and fell; a rosy blush stole over her face, and her dreamy eyes were raised to the man before her, with a look of perfect love.

Then, in a voice of wondrous sweetness, she said:

"Clarence, you have made me what I am—and heart, body, ay, soul, I am yours."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

A FALSE PAGE.

A HALO of joy seemed to have fallen upon the hearts of the trio at Wildide, when Clarence and Eve made known to Colonel Erskine that they were to become man and wife.

"God bless you, my son, and may He always guard you, my daughter. No joy of my life was ever greater than the present one, for I have longed for this hour to come."

"Now, Clarence, what do you intend to do?"

"Well, father, my duties will call me back to the city in about two weeks, and Eve has consented, with your permission, to go with me as my wife. You might also accompany us, sir."

"No, I will remain here; and, my son, you must give up your law and come back to Wildide, and we can be so happy here together."

"I will think of it, sir."

"Right, and decide as I wish you to; but two weeks is a very short time. Why, you will not be able to have the grand wedding I would like to give you, and a marriage in the church."

"Father, I detect all that makes a bride conspicuous, and I verily believe that most marriages in churches are more for show than sacredness."

"It places the bride in a bold position, the object of a hundred curious eyes, and many, frequently, not very kind criticisms, at a time when she should feel most retiring. No, no; I detect public marriages, and believe the place to get a wife is in her own home, not in a crowded church, dishonored by a curious rabble of gossipers and newsmongers."

"I agree with Clarence, papa Erskine, for I wish to avoid becoming an object of curiosity."

"Very well; you can be married here quietly, and then drive to town and take the train, the same day if you wish. Eve, command me for all that you wish for your trousseau."

Thus it was decided, and so quietly were the arrangements made for the wedding that the day rolled round without the affair becoming even generally known in the neighborhood.

Only a few persons were invited, the families of the officiating clergyman and of Dr. Mayhew, so that the other friends of Wildide could not feel slighted at being forgotten.

It was a bright and glorious day, the wedding morn, and Clarence Erskine's face had lost considerable of its sternness, and Eve seemed full of a quiet joy, while Colonel Erskine was almost wild one moment with delight, and miserable the next with regret, at the thought that the sunshine of his home was going from him for many days.

At length the young couple took their stand before the minister, and if Eve felt the base crime she was committing no evidence of such feeling rested upon her brilliantly beautiful face, for, dressed in a dark-gray traveling suit, with hat and gloves to match, she looked exquisitely lovely.

Then the marriage-service began, and the deep-toned voice of the clergyman, unmindful of wrong-doing, unknowing that he was performing a false marriage, pronounced them man and wife.

Once and once only there was a quiver of Eve's nether lip—but the emotion was instantly overcome, and clearly she responded to the questions asked by the minister.

Then followed kind wishes and congratulations from those present, all of whom had some costly gift for the bride, and after luncheon, in which the young couple were toasted in rare old wine, the carriage drove round to the door, and, entering it, Clarence Erskine and Eve were driven rapidly away to town. There they took the train for New York city, where it was their intention to pass a few weeks.

Thus was Eve guilty of crime in the sight of God; but, in defiance of all law, she had gained her ambitious ends.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PLOTTERS.

WHEN the gipsy queen turned away from the orange-grove arbor, she walked rapidly through the forest, until she came to a carriage-drive winding back into the country.

Here, apparently awaiting her, was a horseman, idly swinging the leaves from a tree with his riding-whip.

He was a man of good figure, and had a frank, manly face, the lower part of which was covered with a long, gold-brown, silken beard, which completely hid his mouth.

His eyes were restless, keen, and fearless, while his hair was worn long, falling upon his shoulders.

Dressed in a suit of dark cloth, with his pants stuck in his boot-tops, and a slouch hat upon his head, any one would have taken him for a wealthy country planter.

Catching sight of the woman he said, simply:

"Well?"

"I have seen her; I had a long talk with her in an arbor near the mansion, and I pretended to read to her a leaf of her past life—telling her the whole truth, but it made no impression upon her."

"I feared so; she is utterly bad, I have begun to believe."

"She is a woman without a heart; but I could do no more, for she left me, and I have returned to know what to do."

"I have been thinking: that she intends to marry Clarence Erskine, I feel assured, yet it will not be for some time, I hope."

"This must be prevented, as you know, and in the mean time I must see Claude Clinton, alias Clinton Clarendon."

"You do not fear recognition?"

"No; none of those who once knew me would recognize me now. You may go back to the village, for your vehicle has only gone up the road and will soon return for you. Remain there until you hear from me."

"You had better beware of Claude Clinton. Should he recognize you your life would be the penalty," said the woman.

"No fear; I will seek his home to-night, and as it is miles away I must be off. Your wagon will soon return; good-by, and may we be successful in our present work."

"God grant it," answered the gipsy, as the man rode rapidly away.

A moment after a wagon came up, with a negro driver; into this the woman sprang and drove off in another direction from that taken by the horseman, who kept on at a rapid pace for several miles, until he came to a lonely road leading into the swamp.

Turning into this he pressed on, until he suddenly drew rein, for the form of a man lay by the roadside.

It was a negro, worn down by sickness, and with a severe wound, not yet healed, upon his head.

"Well, my man, you seem to be suffering and in distress," said the horseman, kindly.

"Yes, sah, I is in de greatest distress; you is a stranger in dese parts, ain't you, massa?"

"Yes, my man, I am a stranger here; but can I do anything for you?"

"Massa, you seems kind to de poor old nigger, sah, and you can be ob service, 'kase I've got a hard story to tell, sah."

"You seem as though you had been treated harshly, my man, and were almost starved."

"I's got all I want to eat, boss, but my mind ain't right, 'kase I feel bad toward a gemman who didn't do right by me."

"You have been severely punished by your master, and ran away, I suppose?"

"It ar worse dan dat, boss, much worse, sah. Be you in a hurry, sah?"

"I am going down to Mr. Clarendon's plantation. Is it far from here? If not, I can pause awhile."

The negro shrunk back at the name, and cried, as if in mortal terror:

"You ain't a friend o' his'n, is yer, boss?"

Struck by the manner of the negro, the horseman replied:

"No, I wished to see him on business only; do you know him?"

"Yes, sah; he was my boss, my massa; not as I blonged to him, sah, for you see my own good massa set me free when he die; but Massa Clarendon, he buy my old massa's place, and I jist continue on to lib wid him, sah, for I didn't have no home; but, boss, you has bin misdirected wrong, sah; dis ain't de road to Cliff-side."

"Indeed, I was told to turn to the right, by a gentleman, when I asked the way."

"Yes, sah, but you tuk de wrong turnin'; de right one, sah, am a mile back. Massa, you don't got no little drop o' wheesky, and chaw o' baccy, hab you, sah, for poor nigger, for I feel mighty bad."

"Yes, here is a flask of brandy; help yourself, and here are a few cigars which may be better than a chew of tobacco."

The negro took a long pull at the flask, and then put one of the cigars in his mouth to serve as a "chaw o' baccy," and at once invigorated thereby, he said:

"Massa, you is a good man to dis poor nigger, sah, and I would like to tell you how it is I is hidin' here in de swamp like a wolf, and Massa Clarendon am de cause."

Struck by the earnest manner of the negro, the horseman replied:

"I will hear all you have to say, and if you are useful to me, my man, you shall not need a friend; but may not some one pass here?"

"Dey don't many folks cum dis way, sah; but s'pose you go wid de ole nigger to he home in de swamp?"

Without a word the horseman acquiesced, and the negro led the way further and further into the dense swamp, until he came to a small hill, or mound, out of which were growing several large trees.

Among these was located a small hut, made of logs and brush, and inside there was evidence of its being occupied.

Dismounting and hitching his horse, the stranger entered the humble abode, and glanced curiously around him.

There was a cane bed in one corner, an old musket on a rack, a three-legged table, and a fireplace, around which were several cooking utensils.

Upon the wall hung a side of bacon and two

bags, one containing meal, the other ground coffee.

An old overcoat and a blanket, the worse for wear, were all the clothing visible.

"Dis am my home, massa, and dat debble ob a man, Massa Clarendon, am de cause why I lib here; but I's got one friend who bring me pervisions, and has tuk car ob me while I was hurted, for you see, sah, I's been patty low down from dis blow on my head, sah."

"Yes, you seem to have indeed had a hard time of it; now take another pull at my brandy flask, and tell me all you know about Mr. Clinton Clarendon, as he is called."

As an hour passed ere the horseman came out of the hut, he doubtless found the negro's story a most interesting one, and there was an expression on his face that showed he had gained some important news.

Shaking hands with his new-found friend, and leaving him his flask, the horseman mounted and rode away, while the negro chuckled forth, with an expression of joy upon his emaciated face:



## MY OLD ARM-CHAIR.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

My old arm-chair has served me long,  
There's not another such.  
My old arm-chair I love it well—  
The neighbors say too much.  
When I have lots of work to do,  
And toil's extremely rough,  
I love to sit in this and think  
How I can put it off.

My old arm-chair! How sweet I rest  
When folded in its arms!  
And though ungainly to the sight  
It has a thousand charms.  
What if a leg sometimes kicks out  
And overboard I go?  
I do not blame this old arm-chair,  
Because I love it so.

For years it has supported me  
In the best style that's known,  
And always with wide-opened arms  
Invited to sit down;  
The trouble is I never had  
The courage to decline,  
And hours out of my pocket slipped  
In this old chair of mine.

When wearied out with doing naught,  
And tired with too much fun,  
This old arm-chair I've always sought—  
Nor had to be knocked down.  
A person who can stand more rest  
Lives in a foreign clime;  
The standing joke is that I'm fond  
Of sitting all the time.

Yes, this old chair has given me  
A fraction long;  
My father says that I have been  
Attached to it too strong;  
He said we had together grown,  
And added, with a scoff,  
That a barrel full of real earthquakes  
Could never shake me off.

This old arm-chair through after years  
Will ever sacred be,  
No mortal man in all the world  
Shall sit in it save me—  
Because he will not get a chance  
Since I am always there,  
I waken up sufficiently  
To bless this old arm-chair.

## One Fellow's Blunder.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

HATTIE HOLLAND bowed her face until the long, flowing tresses fell like a veil of sunshine over her white neck and shoulders, and pressed a fragrant kiss on the pale, sad face lying like a broken lily on its stalk, among the snow-white, coarse muslin pillows.

Such a true, sweet face it was—Hattie Holland's—that had in it such patience and endurance, and courage, and girlish selflessness, combined with womanly tenderness and pity—a face that thrilled the very soul of the invalid on the couch, as the true, brown eyes smiled down in her own wistful ones, and the warm, pulsing hands clasped her own feverish fingers, and the cool, glowing lips touched her mouth with the airy lightness of an angel's caress.

"My dear child! What have I to wish for so long as God gives you to me? Hattie, you are a great, great comfort to me."

The girl pressed her mother's hand sympathetically, then laughed.

"Mamma, what a blessing that I am not spoilt! You are the most inveterate flatterer I ever knew. Only—I hope you will be glad to know there is a vestige of truth in your compliment this time, mamma dear. I am going to be a real, practical comfort, I hope, for at last I have a situation that will repay us for all our deferred hopes. Just to think, mamma, of eight dollars a week, regularly! Imagine the sugar, and coal, and tea, and jellies, and oranges it represents! Mamma, tell me you are glad."

Hattie's cheeks were flushed like an oleander blossom, and her violet-blue eyes were shining like twin stars.

Mrs. Holland smiled at her delight no less than from her own thankfulness.

"Glad! Hattie, child, you know I am more than glad. Tell me who has employed you?"

For a second the soft violet eyes sunk, and a deeper flush suffused the round, blooming cheeks; then, Hattie looked in the questioning face, straightly, gravely.

"Mamma, you must try to think the very best you can of it. I was afraid you wouldn't be entirely pleased, but it is the greatest chance offered me since I left Miss Tracy's millinery rooms. Mamma, dear, it is at Ellener's theater."

"Ellener's theater! Hattie, I can not permit it. You, my child, Ross Holland's daughter, on the boards of a theater! Hattie, I'd rather starve!"

The girl's red lips quivered suspiciously, then she laughed lightly.

"Oh, no you wouldn't, mamma, and besides I shouldn't let you. But, remember this—if you say no, mamma, I will give it up, although I think you do not understand what I will have to do. It isn't to act, of course, for I never could do that, nor is it anything to do with—with those—short dresses—or—anything."

Hattie flushed and halted in her speech, then rushed on again.

"It will really be delightful, mamma! I shall only be required to make one of a chorus of girls who will be dressed in sea-green tarletane, to represent water-nymphs in the last scene. It will only take about an hour from home, mamma, and eight dollars a week! I think it is just a God-send! Do consent, mamma!"

Her face was glowing with excitement, and her eyes looked like velvet stars. Mrs. Holland's own eyes moistened at the girl's eager pleading.

"Hattie, why doesn't your aunt Susie answer my letters and soften her heart to me? Then you would never have to go to Ellener's theater, or Miss Tracy's millinery, again. Hattie, child, sometimes I think we haven't a friend in the world—"

Hattie interrupted her, almost eagerly.

"Mamma, how can you think so? Surely you haven't forgotten dear old Mrs. Gray, who sends you such delicious soup and custards, or Dr. Conway—mamma, how good Dr. Conway has been to us, bringing you flowers and books, and positively refusing to send in his bill until he discharges you cured. And Harry—oh! mamma, could you have forgotten Harry Esmond?"

Hattie was pink as a carnation as she uttered her brave, loving protest against this best, dearest friend of hers—handsome Harry Esmond—whose lips had confessed such sweet words to her, whose plain little ring she had worn nearly three months on her engagement finger.

Mrs. Holland sighed.

"It is ungrateful, I know, child, but the idea of you going on the stage has overwhelmed me. But, if you'll see what he thinks about it."

Hattie drew her pretty, graceful figure up.

Dr. Conway can not expect to decide for me, mamma, much as I respect him. I will run down to Harry's store to buy the tarletane after tea, and tell him—he ought to be told. Mamma, I'll make you some delicious buttered toast, and warm over that broiled bird Dr. Conway sent you for dinner, shall I?"

Harry Esmond came in, humming a tune from Moody and Sankey; a dapper little fellow, with close-curling black hair, that was parted very near the middle, and arranged to precise perfection. His blue eyes were shaded by long, curling lashes, and a mustache that gave encouraging promise darkened his upper lip. His attire was neat, even dandyish—close buttoned frock coat, spotless linen, with tiny studs and immense cuff buttons; brown necktie, and a general air of pleased consciousness all over him.

He entered the cozy little sitting-room and looked into the dining-room inquiringly.

"Supper ready, mother? I'm in a hurry to-night, for we've all got to go back. Old Remsen's a stave to work clerks to death."

He threw himself into a rocking-chair.

"Supper'll be on the table in five minutes, Harry, and it won't take quarter that time to tell you something I heard to-day about Hattie Holland."

Harry looked up, interested.

"Hattie Holland! What did you hear? Come into a fortune?"

Mrs. Esmond curled her lip sneeringly.

"A fortune of disgrace I should call it! I have always said, you know, Harry, that there was something about that girl I didn't quite fathom, and I told you when you engaged yourself to her that I didn't fancy her fine fancy airs. Now, you'll find for yourself she's no equal for you, if you are only a fancy-goods salesman."

An impatient frown was darkening on the young fellow's face.

"And what's all that rigmarole got to do with Hattie Holland? She's as pretty and as nice—"

Mrs. Esmond interrupted him eagerly.

"Very pretty—exactly! And it's her beauty that's her ruin, Harry. Hattie Holland has accepted a position at Ellener's theater—one of those disgraceful creatures I've heard you laugh about, that stand around anyhow while the colored lights are burning."

The rockers of Harry's chair stopped suddenly.

"Mother, I don't believe it! Hattie knows better than to throw herself away; she wouldn't dare displease me and do it. You depend upon it, it's a mistake."

Mrs. Esmond carried in the pot of fragrant, steaming tea, stopping decisively at her son's side.

"I tell you it's so. Hattie accepted the position in John Dwyer's hearing this very afternoon, when John was doing some carpentering in the office of the theater. She's to get eight dollars a week and be dressed in green illusion and wax-heads."

Harry caressed his incipient mustache with a troubled air.

"I don't understand it. Hattie knows that if such were the case it would—well, it will end our engagement. If I am poor enough to be obliged to work for my living, I will not marry a girl who would demean herself so. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I resent the way she has treated me in entirely ignoring me and my feelings on the subject."

Mrs. Esmond's small green-gray eyes twinkled with satisfaction as she poured the tea; but, for all his manly determinations, his appetite failed him, and he felt strangely uncomfortable at the idea of giving up the beautiful girl he was secretly so proud of.

But—a milliner and a ballet-girl, or—anything off the stage—was the one degree beyond the limits of his narrow reasoning process.

Nevertheless, his face was perceptibly lengthened as he went back to the store—Remsen and Remsen's mammoth emporium on Sixth avenue, where two or three score of young men like himself were required to attend to the wants of the public.

At his counter, a graceful figure was sitting, with a veil over her face, that was removed as Harry approached her; and he found himself face to face with Hattie Holland, all tender smiles and flushes and modest welcome.

"I've only been waiting a few minutes, Harry. I want you to select the shade of green you think will be the most becoming—tarletane, an entire piece, please."

Green tarletane! Her very first words were proof of the awful truth. He bowed gravely and awkwardly.

"What do you want with a piece of green tarletane, Hattie? We seldom sell it except to ball-goers or theatrical people—and you are neither, I hope."

He flattered himself he had put it remarkably neat.

Hattie laughed softly.

"Not a ball-goer, Harry, but a new addition to the ranks of theatrical folk. Why—you look—as if—why, Harry?"

She flushed confusedly under his cold reproach of manner; and the young gentleman's courage rose in proportion to her confusion.

"If I look as though I was horrified beyond measure to hear you joke so needlessly, I certainly do not believe my feelings."

A little determined look crept around her mouth, and her voice was very quiet in reply.

"It was far from being a joke, Harry. I am engaged at Ellener's theater, and came to buy my stage dress and tell you all about it."

There was a chord of piteous pleading in her low, sweet voice.

"Engaged at Ellener's theater—you, my betrothed wife! Hattie, are you crazy? Don't you know it's not decent! Why, what would my mother say, my folks, if I married a girl off the stage? Hattie, you surely are beside yourself."

Her face was white now, and there was a glitter in her eyes now to him.

"What your mother or the rest of your 'folks' say cannot matter to me, since I do not propose to afford them any opportunity. Please give me a piece of the lightest green tarletane, Mr. Esmond. Here is the money and something that belongs to you."

She laid a bill down on the counter, and beside it the little gold ring she had worn only a few short weeks; and took her parcel and went out of the store with the air of a princess who had been offering a great benefit.

And Harry Esmond wondered how on earth he had managed it so blunderingly that Hattie Holland had dared give him his *conge*, and feeling a curiously commingled sensation of relief and heart-soreness that it was really so.

While Hattie, with indignant wrath one minute overwhelming her, the next bitter misery, rode home, wondering if her mother had not told the truth after all when she had said they had not a friend in the world?

To find the wicked doubt dispelled forever by the news that greeted her from her mother's trembling lips as she opened the door, wearied in heart and body.

"Hattie! Hattie! throw the horrid green tarletane in the fire as quick as you can! What do you think—oh, what do you think, and we'd never have known it if it hadn't been for Dr. Conway? And to think how I've been grumbling because sister Susan didn't answer my letters! Oh, Hattie! Hattie!"

Hattie's sad eyes looked the very picture of puzzled surprise, and when Dr. Conway stepped

in from the little kitchen where he had been mixing his powders, she was still frowning inquiringly.

He bowed and smiled—a smile that lighted his thoughtful face like a sunburst over clouds.

"I fear Mrs. Holland will have to delegate her pleasant surprise, and sad news, to me to tell. Your aunt Susan died the day she received your mother's first letter, Miss Hattie, and has made you sole heiress of a fortune not less than a hundred thousand dollars."

And in the silence that followed, Hattie Holland thought how perfectly happy she would have been if only Harry Esmond and she were good friends again.

Mr. Harry Esmond turned from the store-door of Remsen & Remsen, where he had been lazily lounging for a leisure ten minutes.

"Did you see that turnout, Hill! Footman and coachman in navy blue and silver! That's what I call style, Hill."

Ed Hill winked knowingly.

"Style! tip-top. Why on earth didn't you bow to the lady? She looked this way—Miss Holland, you know."

Esmond stared, then curled his lip contemptuously.

"That's good! Miss Holland of my acquaintance is a poor girl, who is on the—who used to work for Miss Tracy on Canal St."

Hill laughed boisterously.

"And didn't you know that the selfsame Miss Holland who bought that green tarletane here the night we fellows swore something was up, had come to a fortune—aunt out in England died—lives on the Avenue, and all that sort?"

"Did I know it? No, but I know it now, and it won't take five minutes to square us off. Then good-by to counter-jumping, Hill. I declare, I'd see her to-night, if I knew where to find her."

"I don't think I would, if I were you, Esmond. Your cake is all dough, you know, because Miss Holland is engaged to Dr. Conway, I understand—in fact, I have it confidentially from my cousin Kate, who is to begin the bride's trousseau at once, Esmond—show this lady the pearl silks."

It was bad—bad enough; but infinitely worse when, that very afternoon, Miss Holland, all friendly smiles, and pleasant courtesy—but that was as effectual as a barricade of iron to make him keep his distance—when, her elegant carriage standing at the door, and her obsequious footman standing guard at its door, Miss Holland came sweeping through the store to the counter over which Harry Esmond presided, and asked to be shown the newest thing in bridal silks, vouchsafing the pleasant information that Dr. Conway strongly preferred cream-color.

And Harry Esmond—as all men do, invariably—laid the blame on some one else; his mother, the Ellener theater people—anybody but where it belonged, at his own cowardly soul.

## Romance on the Rail.

## The Mad Engineer.

BY GUY GLYNDON.

"WAL, fellows," said Cap Lollar one day, while we were waiting for a wreck to be cleared away a mile down the track, "d'y see that thar leetle memento?"

He pointed to a deep scar just over his left eye.

"I've alays thought thar was a yarn hitched to that thar beauty spot," said the rear brakeman, elevating his feet against the boiler head, as he lay on his back on the pilot. "I go my pile it war a rantaunkens lick that fetched it."

"It war a lick that fetched me—ur mighty nigh it!" said Cap, impressively.

"Prime up, ole man, an' let's have it!" said Shackler Dick, who owed his *sobriquet* to his reputed unusual skill at coupling cars; and he tossed over his tobacco-pouch as a matter of course.

"Wal," said Cap, when he had "primed up," "it's a good many year since I got that lick; but I reckon the scar'll go before I dismember the circumstances under, which it was got. Ye see, I was a strappin' buck of a boy when I was promoted from shacklin' cars to firin'."

Like every doggoned fool in his first year, I thought I knowed all about an engine before I knowed one side o' nothin'."

I reckon I couldn't 'a' run a hand-car O. K., when we got dumped in the ditch, an' ole Pap Crampton got mashed into soap-grease between the boiler-head and the end of the tender. Pap war'n't no skeleton; but thar war'n't much left to pick up—only the taller an' wickin'."

As fur me, I was heaved out o' the cab winder, an' lit on my back in the marsh, as soft an' as lovely as a duck's foot in the mud.

"Wal, I was doggoned fool enough to think I was goin' to step into Pap's shoes; an' the first thing I done was to git some drunk. But they didn't savvy no such nonsense at headquarters, you bet! an' they peeled the dough off o' my eyes double-quick, by puttin' a galoot over me that had set on the box before."

"Wal, he was an odd chick. I reckon thar didn't nobody sound him much below the surface. He war'n't sour nor glum; but he was closer'n an oyster. Nobody didn't seem to know whar he come from, or who he was. He called himself Jim Lippet; but a name didn't count fur much in that section of country."

"He treated me white enough, though I was a leetle edgeways at his bein' put over my head, an' I reckon I showed it some. Only thar was a flash in his black eyes that showed that he couldn't stand no foolshin', yer hunky-dory right! So I shut down a leetle on the throttle, an' went it mild, fur a spell."

"One thing looked kind o' jebous—when he war'n't on duty he'd set all in a heap like, with his head a-hangin' down an' his elbows on his knees; an' some said as how they'd heard him a-talkin' to himself. The boys reckoned he was light some rs in the upper story; but they couldn't deny but what he was sharper'n chain lightning' when he was on the box with the lever in hand."

"The boys chaffed me some."

"You'd better look sharp, Cap," says Jo Bradley. "Dummy Lippet'll git riled one o' those fine days, an' bounce you out o' the cab winder."

"Dummy, or no dummy, he's a better man than you," says I; fur I allow not to shake no boss, if he was the devil himself."

"He might not be that, an' yet be ahead o' his fireman," says Jo.

"Maybe you've got the muscle to back your opinion—maybe you hain't!" says I, a-waltzin' up to Bradley an' peelin' my blouse.

"Jo war'n't no coward, whatever else ailed him; so we had it rough an' tumble, until I got him in chancery, an' he caved. But I didn't git this lick in that set-to; only the boys let up on their gaggin' o' me, after that; fur Jo war'n't no beauty when I got done with him."

"Things run on fur a month or so, when one day Dummy Lippet (they called him that—

only behind his back, though!—because he was so mumb), got a letter that struck him all in a heap. All the while we was waitin' at the Junction fur the up-train to pass us, he sot there on the box like a wooden man, holdin' the letter in his hand, but not readin' of it. He didn't look mad, an' he didn't look pleased. He may have been keepin' up a deuce of a thinkin'; but if he was, his face never changed a hair. An' yet he didn't look sleepy nor stupid. He was jest dead; and that's the long an' short of it."

"Byme-by, 'long come the conductor; an' he says, says he:

"'We'll have to make a mighty spy run of it to make connections to-night. Joyce is a thunderin' sight behind hand lately. This makes the third time in two weeks."

"Lippet pulled off his thinkin'-cap as if he was bein' lugged out o' a drunken sleep. Fur just a minute he looked as if he wasn't thar; an' then he drew a long breath an' shook himself, an' answered up as spy an' as chipper as ever:

"'It's all right, boss. We'll make it up fast enough. We've got a forty-mile run clear; an' the ole '76 can pick up half a day if necessary, in that distance."

"'Sock it to 'er!' says the conductor; an' Lippet, he says:

"'You bet!'"

"He was a standin' up straight by this time, a-fingerin' of the throttle, nervous like. Somehow his eyes glittered and his teeth come together with a snap that made cold streaks run down my back."

"There's the simple facts, gentlemen, an' I hain't ashamed to own 'em; but if any man says I was a coward, it's my opinion he's a liar—an' I always backs my opinion with money or muscle, whichever suits the company! I war'n't afraid of no livin' critter between hyer an' kin'dom-comes; an' if anybody had asked me, I'd 'a' told 'em it was my private opinion that I could flog Dummy Lippet, an' all his wife's relations, clean over the smoke-stack; so I know I war'n't scared o' him; but, nevertheless, the cold streaks run up an' down my back like buttons on a billiard-string."

"Wal, all this time the clouds was a-scootin' across the sky like scart ghosts; an' when the up-train come boom-in into the Junction the night was blacker'n a stack o' black cats, an' it was a-droppin' down fur keeps. As Joyce's head-light shone in Lippet's face, his black eyes snapped like glass beads, an' give me another round o' the shivers."

"I was mad because I felt so, an' swore to myself that I'd tie him up in a double bow-knot if he opened his head to me. But it didn't matter a cuss; I shivered all the same."

"Give 'er all the fodder she kin chew up, Cap," says Lippet, pullin' the bell an' givin' her steam; an' madder'n a drunken fiddler, I chucked in the wood, until she was full up to the crown-sheet."

"Fur fifty-mile we made our stations like clockwork. I'd got all over my mad by that time, an' forgotten that there was anything queer about Lippet. But when we started in on that forty-mile stretch, I soon got waked up, you bet a hoss!"

"Lippet straightened up an' throwed his shoulders back; an' blow me if he didn't look three inches taller. An' his eyes was peeled, hoss! Lay yer last dollar on that! Lookin' out ahead as if he'd cut a hole into the night, he stood holdin' the throttle wide open. An' rollin' an' tumblin', an' bouncin', as if we was goin' to leave the rail at every turn of the drivers, we streaked it through the darkness."

"Fellers, if the devil was makin' a poor cuss walk Spanish across a bridge made out of a single hair, seventeen thousand feet from the ground, I allow that individual might feel streaked about the gills, an' not be a hoss coward after all. I knowed that if we jumped the rail at that speed, in two seconds that train would be finer'n matches, an' yer humble servant most like gone to glory!"

"More'n this, I happened to glance at the water gauge, an' guessed that, by the way she was rollin' an' pitchin', sometimes the crown-sheet was covered, an' sometimes it war'n't. Here was another delightful prospect! If we didn't git h'isted clean over nowhere, we stood a right smart chance o' gittin' steamed until we was tenderer'n spring chicken!"

"An' thar stood Lippet, lookin' like the devil in a play—his nostrils quiverin', his eyes blazin', an' his face workin' so that his teeth showed like fangs. It didn't take two squints to show me that the man was stark, starin' mad!—crazier'n the craziest bedbug that ever run a railroad boardin'-house!"

"An' then he yells out:

"'Ho! fireman, shove in the timber! At seventeen thousand miles a minute, we'll make the moon before sun-up! Jam 'er full! Hurry! This hyer's breezy!"

"Then he opened the window, lettin' the wind an' rain stream in, an' tearin' open his shirt to cool off in the draught."

"See! There's the moon!" he yelled again, pointin' out ahead."

"I looked an' saw a head-light down the track. I knowed there war'n't no danger from that. It was on the side-track at a little station that we didn't stop at. Only he ought to have pulled up a bit goin' over the switches. But he didn't; an' we was spun by the head-light he yelled again:

"'By heavens! we've passed the moon! Never mind; it ain't o' much account anyhow. We'll keep on to Jupiter! Ho, there! fireman, why don't you shove in the fuel? It won't do to git stalled up hyer—we'd freeze to death in no time! Fill 'er up—fill 'er up!"

"'Sho's chuck full,' says I, thinkin' I could fool him, an' wishin' that we was at the end o' the line, where he'd have to pull up, yet not knowin', after all, if he'd know enough to."

"At that he whirled around, an' I thought that them two eyes o' his'n was burnin' two holes clean through my carcass—dogged if I didn't!"

"'What's that?' yells he. 'Insubordination! Do you dare to hesitate when I command! Do you lie to me? Who's master hyer? Do I run this hyer shebang, or you? Down, knave, and obey!"

"Now, gents, nobody don't want to snicker, unless he's itchin' to git his face knocked off inside o' two minutes an' a half! If any man thinks I'm a flunk, he knows that he kin git his money's worth any time, by jest waltzin' up to the captain's office."

"I said I could flog Dummy Lippet an' all his race an' generation over the smoke-stack; an' I don't chaw my words worth a cent. I could do it, while he was a man! But with them devil's eyes a-goin' through me like red-hot gimblets, I chucked wood into that fire-box without a whimper—as meek as a parson in a rain-storm!"

"Look out, gent! If any galoot says he wouldn't 'a' done as I done, I'll call him a liar, an' back it as long as one muscle an' one bone stick together!"

"Jest then thar was a tug at the bell-rope; an' I knowed that the conductor was gittin' scart. But that only seemed to make the lunny mad with glee. He danced, he yelled, he hur-

rayed, all the time talkin' to me in a way that made me feel watery in the stomach."

"An' all the time the water was a-gittin' lower an' the steam higher. Everything was stratin' an' groarin' as if it would fly to pieces; an' we was goin' faster an' faster on a lot o' down grades, with level stretches between."

"'Hadin't you better give 'er a leetle more water!' says I, persuasive like."

"'But I had made up my mind that, if he turned round, I'd knock him on the head an' run the shebang myself, the rest of the way."

"'Water! Ha! ha! ha! Water be blowed!' yells he. 'You don't know how to run a light-n' baloon! Ye see, we can't git no further'n Saturn; an' I've got to blow her up to git the rest o' the way. There won't nobody git it but me; but I hain't partic'lar anxious to share the glory. When the machine goes to flinder, them poor devils in the coaches will fall clean through the solar system, an' fetch up smash ag'in' Sirius or Arcturus. You may light astraddle o' the North Pole, if you're careful an' jump when I tell ye—ye see I'm willin' to give you a chance—an' then you kin hoof it fur home."

"'Gents, you bet that war'n't no great shakes o' a prospect; but I thought if I could keep him talkin', I might git a chance to take him off his guard; so I says, says I: